



PENGUIN  CLASSICS

CICERO

On Living and Dying Well

VISIT...

LANZAROTE
Caliente.COM



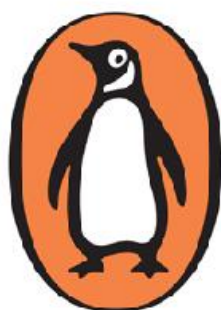
PENGUIN



CLASSICS

CICERO

On Living and Dying Well



P E N G U I N
C L A S S I C S

MARCUS TULLIUS CICERO

On Living and Dying Well

Translated with an Introduction and Notes by
THOMAS HABINEK

PENGUIN BOOKS

Contents

Chronology

Introduction: Why Does Cicero's Philosophy Matter?

Further Reading

PHILOSOPHY AT ROME

On the Ultimate Good and Evil, or

On Ends, 1.1–12

AGAINST FEAR OF DEATH

Tusculan Disputations, Book 1 (Entire)

THE DIVINITY OF THE UNIVERSE

On the Nature of the Gods 2.18–44

WISDOM ACROSS THE AGES

Tusculan Disputations 5.5–11

PHILOSOPHY AND OPPRESSION

On Divination 2.1–7

FRIENDSHIP

Laelius, or On Friendship (Entire)

ON DUTIES, OR LIFE IN ACCORDANCE WITH HUMAN NATURE

On Duties, Book 1 (Entire)

DEATH AND BURIAL OF CICERO

Selections from ancient authors

Cicero's Life, by Siobhán McElduff

Maps

Notes

ON LIVING AND DYING WELL

MARCUS TULLIUS CICERO (106–43 BCE), Roman orator and statesman, was born at Arpinum of a wealthy local family. He was taken to Rome for his education with the idea of a public career and, by the year 70, he had established himself as the leading barrister in Rome. In the meantime, his political career was well under way and he was elected praetor for the year 66. His ambitious nature enabled him to obtain those honours which would normally only have been conferred upon members of the Roman aristocracy. One of the most permanent features of his political life was his attachment to Pompey. As a politician he compromised for the good of the Republic; as a statesman, his ideals were more honourable and unselfish than those of his contemporaries. Cicero was the greatest of the Roman orators, possessing a wide range of technique and an exceptional command of the Latin tongue. He followed the common practice of publishing his speeches, but he also produced a large number of works on the theory and practice of rhetoric, on religion, and on moral and political philosophy. He played a leading part in the development of the Latin hexameter. Perhaps the most interesting of all his works is the collection of 900 remarkably informative letters, published posthumously. These not only contain a first-hand account of social and political life in the upper classes at Rome, but also reflect the changing personal feelings of an emotional and sensitive man.

THOMAS HABINEK is Professor and Chair of Classics at the University of Southern California. He has published extensively on Roman literature and culture, including *The Politics of Latin Literature* (1998), *The World of Roman Song: From Ritualized Speech to Social Order* (2005) and *Ancient Rhetoric and Oratory* (2005).

SIOBHÁN MCELDOUFF is assistant professor of Latin Language and Literature in the Department of Classical, Near Eastern and Religious Studies at the University of British Columbia. She is the translator of Cicero: *In Defence of the Republic*.

Chronology

106 BCE Cicero born (3 January).

91–87 Social War.

89 Cicero serves in the army of Pompey the Great's father.

88 Start of First Mithridatic War. Sulla's first march on Rome. Marius flees Rome.

86 Death of Marius.

Philosophical and Rhetorical Works: *On Invention* (date uncertain).

83–81 Second Mithridatic War.

82 Sulla's second march on Rome. Proscriptions of Marius' supporters.

81–79 Sulla's dictatorship.

81 Cicero's first extant speech (*In Defence of Quinctius*).

80 Cicero delivers *In Defence of Roscius of Ameria*. Marries Terentia (c. 80).

c. **79** Birth of Cicero's daughter, Tullia.

79–77 Cicero travels to the east and studies rhetoric in Athens and Rhodes.

78 Death of Sulla.

c. **76** Cicero delivers *In Defence of Roscius the Actor*.

75 Cicero's quaestorship in Sicily.

74–63 Third Mithridatic War.

73–71 Verres governor of Sicily.

70 Delivers *Against Verres*. First consulship of Pompey and Crassus. Tribunes' power of veto restored. Senate loses exclusive control of juries.

69 Cicero plebeian aedile. Delivers *In Defence of Marcus Fonteius*.

67 *Lex Gabinia* gives Pompey the command in the war against the pirates.

66 Cicero's praetorship. Delivers *For the Manilian Law*. Pompey given command in the Third Mithridatic War.

65 Birth of Cicero's son Marcus.

63 Cicero's consulship. Catilinarian conspiracy. Cicero delivers *On the Agrarian Law II* (January). *Catilinarians* delivered and Catilinarian conspirators executed (December). Tullia marries for the first time

(c. 63).

- 62** Pompey returns to Italy and disbands his army. Clodius desecrates the rites of Bona Dea (December). Cicero delivers *In Defence of Archias*.
- 61** Clodius acquitted in the Bona Dea affair.
- 60** First Triumvirate (Caesar, Crassus and Pompey) formed.
- 59** First consulship of Caesar. Julia, Caesar's daughter, marries Pompey. Clodius adopted by Fonteius and becomes a plebeian (March). Cicero unsuccessfully defends Gaius Antonius (his co-consul in 63) on an unknown charge.
- 58** Clodius tribune of the plebs. Cicero leaves Rome to go into exile (20 March). Caesar takes up his five-year command of the province of Gaul.
- 57** Centuriate assembly passes bill for Cicero's recall (4 August). Cicero returns from exile (4 September). Delivers *On his house* (29 September).
- 56** Cicero delivers *In Defence of Sestius*. Triumvirs renew their pact. Cicero successfully defends Marcus Caelius on a charge of public violence brought by Clodius.
- 55** Second consulship of Crassus and Pompey.
Philosophical and rhetorical works: *On the Orator*.
- 54** Julia dies in childbirth.
- 53** Crassus killed by the Parthians at the battle of Carrhae. Cicero elected to the College of Augurs.
- 52** Milo kills Clodius (January). Pompey appointed sole consul. Cicero delivers *In Defence of Milo* (April).
- 51–50** Cicero governor of Cilicia.
- 51** Philosophical and rhetorical works: *On the Republic* and *On the Laws* (date uncertain).
- 50** Caesar asks the Senate to be allowed to stand for the consulship *in absentia* but is refused. Cicero returns to Italy (November).
- 49** Cicero arrives in Rome (4 January). Caesar crosses the Rubicon; start of the civil war between Caesar and Pompey (10 January); Cicero joins Pompey's forces (June).
- 48** Pompey defeated at Pharsalus (August) and murdered in Egypt (September). Cicero returns to Italy and remains in Brundisium until September 47, when Caesar grants him an unconditional pardon.
- 46** Defeat of Republican forces in Africa. Cato the Younger commits suicide (February). Cicero divorces Terentia and marries his ward, Publilia.
Philosophical and rhetorical works: *Brutus*, *Orator*, *Stoic Paradoxes*.

45 Tullia dies (February). Cicero divorces Publilia.

Philosophical and rhetorical works: *Academica*, *On Ends*, *Tusculan Disputations*, *On the Nature of the Gods*.

44 Caesar named dictator for life. Assassinated (15 March). *Philippics* 1–4 (August).

Philosophical and rhetorical works: *On Old Age*, *On Divination*, *On Fate*, *Topics*, *On Friendship*, *On Duties*.

43 Battle of Mutina; Antony defeated but both consuls are killed (April). Formation of the Second Triumvirate. Cicero murdered (7 December).

Further Reading

Study of Ciceronian philosophy is in a state of flux. Scholars still tend to treat his writings as sources for the doctrines of earlier Greek schools of thought. Even those who acknowledge his authorial presence are more inclined to view him as selecting from among pre-existent arguments rather than modifying them or creating his own. Recently, at least a few scholars have begun to understand Ciceronian philosophy as a project unto itself, and to hear in Cicero a strong and distinctive voice in the centuries-long conversation that constituted ancient philosophy.

The best way to get to know Ciceronian philosophy better is to read more of it, following the cues given in the Introduction. Translations of all of his writing are available in the Loeb Classical Library editions. Although they can be a bit musty in tone, they have the advantage of being complete. There are also good scholarly studies of particular aspects of his philosophy, for example Margaret Graver, *Cicero on the Emotions* (Chicago 2002), and Ingo Gildenhard, *Paideia Romana: Cicero's Tusculan Disputations* (Cambridge 2007). The introductions to his enormous commentaries on *De Officiis* (*On Duties*) and *De Legibus* (*On Laws*) by Andrew Dyck (Ann Arbor, 1996 and 2004 respectively) are also helpful, especially in placing Cicero in relationship to earlier philosophical writings. The two-volume sourcebook on *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, by A. A. Long and D. Sedley (Cambridge 1987), identifies the many instances in which Cicero is a key informant on one of the doctrines of the recognized Greek philosophical schools.

A good, up-to-date book on Cicero's influence on later thought has yet to be written. For those who know German, T. Zielinski's *Cicero im Wandel der Jahrhunderte* (Berlin 1912) points to any of a number of later texts in which Cicero figures prominently, for good or bad. But Cicero's impact was more profound and more pervasive than even Zielinski was ready to acknowledge.

Finally, those intrigued by the relationship between ancient thought and modern science may be interested in a short essay of mine, 'Tentacular Mind: Stoicism, Neuroscience, and the Configurations of

Physical Reality', in *A Field Guide to a New Meta-Field: Bridging the Humanities-Neuroscience Divide*, ed. B. Stafford (Chicago 2011).

Introduction: Why Does Cicero's Philosophy Matter?

Marcus Tullius Cicero, orator, statesman and defender of Republican values, might well have been surprised by his posthumous success as a philosopher. During his lifetime he considered philosophy an honourable undertaking, at times even describing it as a prerequisite for effective citizenship. But in his view it was never to be the primary occupation of a free person, whose chief responsibility was to defend and augment the public good. He composed his philosophical treatises only during the periods of his life when political engagement seemed dangerous, immoral or impossible. Their hasty, distracted composition is sometimes evident; despite their high literary value, they lack the stylistic finish of his best speeches.

Yet it is precisely because the philosophical treatises of Cicero emerge from a context of political and social engagement that they have retained their hold on successive generations of readers. Cicero is the antitype of the ivory-tower scholastic. His insights and arguments, even when borrowed or adapted from Greek predecessors, intensify in value for having been tested in the crucible of experience. Without reducing philosophical complexity to mere platitudes, Cicero nonetheless communicates a sense that there are answers to life's basic questions: why am I here? what am I to make of myself? does the universe hold any meaning? is death an evil to be feared? The answers he offers are tentative, and, as he himself would insist, open to review, but they are answers that made a difference to him and to many others throughout history.

The essence of Ciceronian philosophy is a sense of wonder at the interconnectedness of human beings to one another and to the universe that encompasses them. From his early writings on Republican government to his final essay on duties he speaks less of personal happiness than of the relationship between interior and exterior, the one and the many, the present and eternity. The ultimate good of life is virtue, and virtue, far from being a self-righteous adherence to rules, is action in accordance with nature. The ideal life

is one attuned to the particularities of the here and now understood as manifestations of a larger cosmic order. Cicero recommends, without affirming, the Stoic view that the human soul is composed of the same substance as the stars, a fiery breath that animates the universe. Some of the most memorable passages in his philosophical works play on the Latin use of terms for fire, kindling and heat to describe high spirits and passionate commitment. For Cicero, love of country, dedication to honour and zeal for knowledge are all flashes of the same divine or cosmic spark and expressions of virtue. Impulses that we might differentiate as political, moral and intellectual are all part and parcel of what it means to be a human being, of the 'fit' between individual and world.

Cicero derives his philosophical guidelines not through abstract reasoning from first principles but through observation of the world – his own and that of his predecessors and interlocutors. For this reason, he presents his philosophy in the form of dialogic exchange between historical personages and draws heavily – sometimes overtly, sometimes not – on the arguments and examples of earlier writers. Cicero's use of contemporary and historical figures in his dialogues is at times seen as a way of making his ideas more palatable to a resistant Roman readership, which it probably did. But it also matches literary form to philosophical argument, since in Cicero's view it is only through human experience in the world and reflection thereon that philosophical truths – or more likely, probabilities – emerge. For Cicero, memory, both personal and communal, is a vital source of knowledge, to be respected and shaped accordingly.

So, too, Cicero's reliance on Greek writers and teachers is less an adaptation or popularization of superior reasoning, as it is still sometimes regarded, and more an appropriation of the articulated experience of thoughtful predecessors. It seems unlikely that Cicero would have been troubled by charges that he lacked originality, because for him the task of philosophy was not to find new truths, but to relate accumulated wisdom to present circumstances. Indeed, during his lifetime he was faulted for being too original, insofar as he turned Greek ideas, practices and expressions into Latin. But then how could he have done otherwise? To continue to practise philosophy exclusively in Greek would have been to deny its power to affect new audiences living under new historical conditions.

Cicero's philosophical writings fall into three fairly distinct chronological clusters.

During the mid-50s BCE, when Roman politics was dominated by the

so-called First Triumvirate, which was an informal power-sharing arrangement between the military strongmen Pompey, Crassus and Julius Caesar, Cicero composed works on the proper forms of republican government (*De Republica*, or *On the Republic*) and on the education and role of the ideal orator (*De Oratore*, or *On the Orator*). Although these works treat topics that fall outside the conventional philosophical curriculum, they show deep engagement with Stoic and other teachings on the physicality of cognition and the substantive transformations wrought by virtuous living. In *On the Republic* and *On the Orator* Cicero seeks to integrate a traditional aristocratic code of conduct with the intellectually more rigorous teachings of the Greek-speaking philosophers who had become familiar to the Romans as their political and military strength spread across the Mediterranean world. In the dialogues tradition and reason become mutually reinforcing, as the Roman interlocutors identify and authorize the most compelling aspects of Greek teaching while the Greek experts provide the rationale for defending and modifying traditional values and practices in the face of intellectual and political challenges.

Around 46 BCE, during the dictatorship of Julius Caesar, Cicero undertook a second set of philosophical and rhetorical treatises. Initially, as in the 50s, his overt focus was on the challenge to traditional forms of republic governance brought about by the rise of military strongmen. Again, as in the 50s, he suggests that the challenge is to be met at least in part by a revival of the best Roman cultural values. Thus the *Brutus* and the *Orator* (Latin *Orator*, not to be confused with *De Oratore*, *On the Orator*) reflect on the present status of public speaking as symptomatic of a broader political and moral crisis. Although the aims of these two works are overtly political, even personal, in that Cicero uses them to defend his own style of speaking against critical attack, they only make sense if we keep in mind Cicero's deeper philosophical commitments. Public speaking has ethical significance because language is a medium through which dispositions are altered and actions guided to good or bad ends. To disconnect the logical content of a speech from its material expression via rhythm, metaphor and delivery is to put a premium on the thought processes of the speaker at the expense of the symbiotic relationship between orator, audience and world. The abandonment of traditions of public discourse on the part of Caesar and his allies is, in Cicero's view, an act of intellectual as well as political arrogance.

Cicero's other treatises from the period of Caesar's dictatorship make explicit the philosophical commitments implicit in his rhetorical

writings. The lost *Hortensius*, which was addressed to the most successful orator of the age (excepting Cicero), defended philosophy as a legitimate activity for the committed Roman citizen. In the *Academic Discourses* (*Academica*), addressed to the Roman polymath Marcus Terentius Varro, Cicero tackles the thorny issue of the criteria for knowledge. The treatise sets the tone for the rest of Cicero's philosophical enterprise in that it argues for probabilistic knowledge based on sensation and memory and against dogmatic, a priori claims about the world and human conduct. The tentative conclusions of the treatise are reached through mutual exchange of ideas on the part of the participants – a literary representation of the construction of knowledge through interaction that the dialogue defends. In part because of its title, the dialogue is usually understood as a declaration of Cicero's fealty to the New Academic school of philosophy associated with Philo of Larissa, over against the Old Academicism of his former teacher Antiochus of Ascalon and the closely related teachings of the Stoics. But this is precisely to miss Cicero's point that the conflicts between schools often amount to mere word games or tendentious misrepresentations of rivals' positions. By the end of the surviving pieces of the dialogue Cicero has in effect shown how Stoic epistemology invites the self-correcting engagement with the world characteristic of the visual arts, such as sculpture, and of Roman law. Indeed, we might say more generally that Ciceronian philosophy keeps Stoicism from hardening into a set of doctrines and holds it to its self-description as a process of artistic creation. Here in the *Academica*, Cicero's understanding of human perception comes remarkably close to modern constructivist notions: we know the objects of the world to the extent that we are involved in creating them as such.

Also from the period of the dictatorship are treatises on ethics, especially the five-volume study *On the Ultimate Good and Evil* (also called *On Ends*, *De Finibus*) and the shorter essay *Cato the Elder* (or *On Old Age*, *Cato Maior de Senectute*); on human psychology and emotional well-being, specifically *Tusculan Disputations* (*Tusculanae Disputationes*) as well as a lost *Consolation* (*De Consolatione*); and on the physical order of the universe and the place of the divine within it, namely *On the Nature of the Gods* (*De Natura Deorum*) and *On Divination* (*De Divinatione*). Despite their extraordinary range, these works develop certain recurrent and interrelated themes, including the sufficiency of virtue for human well-being, the materiality of the human psyche and its participation in the divine substance, and the

compatibility of traditional Roman values and practices with the most sophisticated Greek understanding of the natural world and man's place within it.

Representative of this body of work is the first book of *Tusculan Disputations*, which is translated in its entirety in this volume. The central issue of the book is whether death is a bad thing. Cicero argues that ultimately it doesn't matter whether we believe the human soul perishes with the body, lives on after death or doesn't exist: regardless, death is nothing to fear and may even be a positive good. If the soul perishes, then there is nothing left to sense pleasure or pain; if it doesn't exist, then the body's demise is the demise of the self; and if the soul does exist and does outlast the body, then it will reunite with divine substance of which it is composed. Stories of punishment or reward after death are treated as outright laughable: how can a bodiless soul be punished? Yet even if the soul survives, it does so as a physical entity that must abide by the laws of physics. To call it divine is not to suggest that it enters a different order of existence or becomes a different kind of being. Cicero has no patience for stories of anthropomorphic gods and goddesses except as a means of organizing public cult. Divinity for him is simply the highest and most refined form of physical existence.

Tusculans thus exemplifies Cicero's resistance to dogmatism, his willingness to tackle central questions head-on and his insistence, shared by a significant strand of ancient philosophy, on answering life's enduring questions without positing an order of being beyond the physical universe. Even in the most optimistic scenario, the soul doesn't see beyond the here and now to some eternal truth of a different metaphysical order; rather, it sees the here and now with complete clarity.

Although the remainder of *Tusculan Disputations* turns from large-scale questions of the place of humanity within the cosmos to more localized concerns with the human psyche, such as the relationship between emotions and judgement and the place of pain and suffering, it is clear that the physical outlook of *Tusculans* Book 1 remains a central aspect of Ciceronian thought. Repeatedly in the later books of *Tusculans* we are asked to conceive of the human mind or spirit as a physical entity, subject, like the body, both to misuse and to therapeutic attention. In the three books *On the Nature of the Gods*, which Cicero composed shortly after *Tusculans*, he presents the perspectives of three leading philosophical sects – Epicurean, Stoic and Academic – on the title issue. Even the wording of the title points

to the interest in understanding divinity in physical terms: the Latin term *natura*, which means something like ‘unchangeable essence’ or ‘defining characteristic’, is also used by Cicero to translate the Greek word for ‘element’, as used in the widespread ancient theory that reality consists of four, and only four, elements – earth, air, fire and water. In other words, in asking about the ‘nature’ of the gods, Cicero is really asking how they can be described in physical, elemental terms.

Once again, as with *Tusculans*, it is the Stoic account that receives fullest explication, with Cicero even remarking in the final words of *On the Nature of the Gods* that, in his view, Stoic physics and theology come closest to resembling the truth. As the excerpt given in this collection makes clear, for the Stoics divinity, or god, is just another name for the animating order of the universe. Unlike the Epicureans, who must falsify their own system in order to accommodate the traditional gods of myth and cult, Stoicism, with its emphasis on the interconnection of all aspects of reality as segments of a single, evolving cosmos, can accept the traditional stories about gods and goddesses as one way in which the logic of the universe comes to be known. The physical continuity of the universe as described by Cicero’s interlocutor Balbus corresponds to the symbiosis between perceiver and perceived outlined in *Academics* and provides a foundation for the ethical system outlined in *On Duties (De Officiis)*.

Cicero appended to *On the Nature of the Gods* two shorter, related works, one *On Fate (De Fato)*, discussing the implications of an exclusively physical world-view for questions of human will, the other, *On Divination (De Divinatione)*, weighing the possibility of predicting the future, through either traditional religious or more up-to-date scientific means of inquiry. As the preface to Book 2 of *On Divination* makes clear, Cicero would have continued his review and reappraisal of the central topics of earlier philosophy, had not the assassination of Julius Caesar on the Ides of March, 44 BCE, thrown his plans into disarray. Instead, he returned to the political sphere, working both in public and behind the scenes to salvage some semblance of republican government out of the chaos of competing factions and ideologies that swept through the ruling class and engulfed the common people of Rome as well. Disappointed by the political ineptitude of the assassins of Caesar, he sought to break up the coalition of Caesar’s followers by encouraging Caesar’s great-nephew and heir Octavian (the future emperor Augustus) and attacking his lieutenant, Mark Antony. In the midst of these struggles

Cicero produced a third and final set of philosophical works which, without abandoning the physicalist framework of *Tusculans*, or *On the Nature of the Gods*, takes a decidedly personal and ethical turn.

Among this last group of treatises is the essay *Laelius* (or *On Friendship*, *Laelius de Amicitia*), dedicated to Cicero's lifelong friend Titus Sempronius Atticus and translated here in its entirety; and his highly influential treatise *On Duties*, of which Book 1 is given here in full. The personal aspects of the treatises are evident. Cicero presents the main conversation about *Laelius*' friendship with Scipio as one transmitted to him by an older friend who was present on the original occasion; he now transmits it, from memory, to his friend Atticus as a token of their own relationship. *On Duties* takes the form of paternal advice to Cicero's son, also named Marcus, who at the time of its composition was studying formal philosophy in Athens. Although Cicero could not have known that he was to die soon after completing *On Duties*, it is hard not to read the treatises as a final testament of ethical advice to his survivors. *On Friendship*, with its depiction of *Laelius* and Scipio, indicates how Cicero would like his relationship with Atticus to be remembered, and *On Duties* lays out guidelines for ethical deliberation that he considers best suited to the next generation of free Roman citizens.

At the same time, both treatises engage rather directly with the political controversies of the era: for Cicero, friendship, which is a natural part of human existence, runs the risk of being corrupted to bad ends if it isn't supported by the virtuous conduct of both participants. Because the Latin word for friendship, *amicitia*, often had the connotation of 'political alliance', it is easy to understand Cicero as commenting on the misuse of political allegiances by various participants in the struggles of the late Republic. So, too, in *On Duties* Cicero does not hesitate to cite actions of Crassus, Pompey and Julius Caesar, major figures in republican politics (all now dead), as instances of ethical misconduct. Rome provides the most compelling examples of the ethical principles outlined by Greek philosophers as well as spectacular instances of their violation.

The ethical issues addressed in *On Friendship* and *On Duties* test the coherence and resilience of the physical outlook developed in the earlier treatises. Friendship arises from man's innate sociability, his connectedness with the rest of the species. A life without friendship would be bestial. Yet the tight bond with others that characterizes friendship generates the possibility of corrupt or malicious behaviour. One might expect awareness of this contradiction to lead to a

statement of absolute moral principles to which each friend must adhere. But Cicero offers nothing of the sort, except a general admonition to ‘good’ behaviour. Instead, he argues that virtue is easier to achieve in association with others, and that the potential dangers of friendship can be avoided by friends’ constant reflection on their shared experience of friendship. Cicero’s emphasis on social interconnection and on the value of embodied experience once again trumps any abstract certainties or universal rules of conduct.

Within the conversation recorded in *On Friendship*, Cicero’s main speaker, Laelius, briefly refers to the Stoic theory of *oikeiosis*, usually translated ‘appropriation’, which teaches that each organism is by nature instilled with the ability and desire to make itself at home in its surroundings. *Oikeiosis* can be understood as a positive spin on the evolutionary principle of survival of the fittest, or negative selection, whereby organisms that don’t adapt become extinct. For Cicero, following the Stoics, *oikeiosis* was an expression of the goodness of the universe in which each part fits the greater whole.

This notion of fitness or suitability is key to understanding the treatise *On Duties*. The Latin word *officium*, traditionally translated as ‘duty’, refers rather to our natural capacities as human beings situated in a particular time and place. We might think of the way in which the ‘office’ of the President or Prime Minister carries with it certain rights and responsibilities regardless of its individual holder. Cicero asks, in effect, what it means to hold the ‘office’ of human. What actions do we undertake to fulfil our roles as rational, social beings? The duties of which he writes, then, are not dictates imposed by some external authority, but impulses or imperatives natural to our humanity. As we will learn, these include impulses towards justice, self-worth, acquisition of knowledge and moderation. If *oikeiosis* bears some resemblance to natural selection, the nature of which Cicero speaks, far from being ‘red in tooth and claw’, as the Darwinian universe has been described, is a providential provider, whose order is by definition good. The office or duty of the human is to observe and abide by that order.

But because the order of the universe is dynamic, not static, and entails change over time, the office of the human is also subject to change, within limits. Thus Cicero will sometimes speak of older, outdated versus newer, more evolved modes of conduct. And he will emphasize the different expectations placed upon people of different statuses – young versus old, ruler versus ruled, Roman versus Greek. Some duties apply to us as human beings, others relate to inborn

traits, to particular situations, to the pattern of life we have set for ourselves. The governing principle is that of fitness or appropriateness, what Cicero calls 'decorum'. Both the athlete and the musician, the Roman and the Greek, the young and the old can be expected to cherish their close relations, but how they organize their daily lives can and should be quite different, just as how they express their affection for their loved ones will vary with circumstances. The doctrine of decorum thus avoids the extremes of a relativistic, individualized ethics, on the one hand, and, on the other, a rigid, inflexible set of rules and regulations. It can lead to a social conservatism if roles or *personae*, as Cicero calls them, are defined narrowly, for example, male versus female, poor versus rich. But it also allows us to conceive of our lives as works of art. The artist is limited by the materials available – their quantity, colour, durability, and so on – yet within those limitations she or he can create wondrous effects.

This is how Cicero imagines each of us moving through the world. The decorum or orderly beauty of the individual life is to be a small-scale version of the orderly beauty of the universe. This emphasis on linking individual to cosmic experience through successively wider circuits of integration is perhaps the single factor that best accounts for the persistent return to Ciceronian philosophy in successive generations. Already in late antiquity, as the literary epitaphs from ancient authors at the end of this volume indicate, Cicero's lifelong engagement with the particular circumstances and challenges of late Republican Rome could be understood, paradoxically, as the basis for his potentially universal significance. Even today the lofty rhetoric of the eulogists has the ring of truth, as different kinds of readers find Ciceronian philosophy suitable to their own needs.

For political thinkers Cicero anchors legitimate government, especially in contrast to absolutism, in an optimistic view of human nature. Humans assemble in political formations out of care for one another. Isolation is not a natural state but a pathology forced on men by tyrants – tyrants of both a political and a philosophical sort. And even in that isolation, we can console ourselves by contemplating the order of nature, thus preparing for the day when we return to the cultivation of our fellow beings. In other words, Cicero provides both a theory of how government should operate (or at least the government of Rome in the first century BCE), and ethical principles for how to comport oneself when it does not.

For artists and art theorists, Cicero's views of the unity of cognition,

whether expressed in language, painting, sculpture, or music, and his principle of decorum provide a philosophical justification for creative endeavour. To speak or paint or write well is to reignite the divine spark within and to reorient oneself and others to the movement of the cosmos. For Cicero, rhetoric, art and philosophy are all modes of communication that by drawing us closer to one another draw us closer to the truth – an outlook that has been especially attractive in periods of cultural, religious and political fragmentation. Through his philosophy, as both content and process, he seeks to recompose a broken world.

To those seeking guidance in a moral quandary or resoluteness in the face of misfortune, Cicero offers a view of the human condition and human action that is both rigorous and adaptable. Virtue, or life in accordance with nature, is the only necessity, yet it manifests itself in as many ways as there are moments and circumstances in a human life. ‘Fitting’ nature is a challenge and an opportunity, whether it’s a matter of choosing the right tone of voice in a conversation or bearing the pain of mortal illness. Throughout the centuries, those who have styled themselves ‘Ciceronians’ have sought to master not just a type of writing but also a manner of life.

Perhaps most surprising is Cicero’s relevance to the contemporary preference for physical, that is, biological explanations of human conduct. Cicero would have understood and endorsed the drive to account for human psychology in scientific terms, but he would have been equally attentive to the ways in which human thought and action create the world from which science derives its laws. There is no room for a dualist division between self and outside world in Cicero’s philosophy: for him reality as we know it can always only be a relationship between the two.

Finally, Cicero serves as a reminder that all thought, all philosophy, is historically specific. As much as any thinker in history, he was a person of consequence in his times. His behaviour did not always accord with the principles in his treatises. More important, the treatises themselves are often blind to disturbing aspects of the culture they addressed – slavery, imperialism and exploitation of various kinds. Whether and to what extent historical context and impact undermine or strengthen the validity of Cicero’s arguments are issues for each reader to decide, as they have been for past readers as well. The fact remains that what Cicero said, and did, and wrote has frequently made a difference in the lives of individuals and communities, and might still today.

Philosophy at Rome

On the Ultimate Good and Evil, or On Ends, 1.1–12

The opening paragraphs of Cicero's treatise On the Ultimate Good and Evil are, in effect, an introduction to his overall philosophical project. In them he defends his decision to write in Latin, as opposed to Greek, which was the more common medium of philosophical discourse. He also explains that his work is not a translation of prior Greek treatises, but a reworking and expansion to fit the needs of his Roman audience. For Cicero, both philosophizing and writing more generally were continuous processes linking past and present and engaging the energies of readers as well as writers. He revises Plato, the Stoics, and so on, as he expects others to read and revise his work. Here Cicero also favourably contrasts philosophy, which in his view concerns all of life, with specialized discourses, such as the law, and even with public service. Public service is the citizen's primary obligation, but philosophy is a more joyous way to spend one's life. In the treatise as a whole Cicero explains and critiques the Epicurean, Stoic and Academic views of the factors that determine human well-being and structure moral deliberation.

I'm well aware, dear Brutus,¹ that various criticisms will be aimed at my effort to commit to Latin what philosophers have already presented with brilliance and acuity in Greek. To certain people, even educated ones, the whole business of philosophizing is distasteful. Others have no objection to philosophy, as long as it's conducted informally, but don't think too much effort should be devoted to it. There will even be some who are proficient in Greek and despise Latin who will say they'd rather put the effort into reading Greek books. Finally, I suspect there will be a few who will advise me to write on other topics, objecting that this kind of writing, even if elegant, doesn't suit my status in life.²

I consider it important to give a short answer to all. To those who object to philosophy altogether, I offered a full defence, and even praised philosophy, in the book³ in which Hortensius attacked it. Because you and others whose judgement I trust approved of that effort, I undertook to write more, not wanting people to think I could

start a project but not pursue it. As for those who approve of philosophy, but prefer that it be handled with moderation, they're asking for a difficult sort of restraint, because once released it can't be reined in. It's almost easier to deal with those who reject philosophy altogether than with those who try to put a limit on its boundlessness and look to moderate an activity that only gets better as it gets more ambitious. If it's possible to attain wisdom, then we should put it to use and not just possess it. And if it's hard to acquire, the only limit on seeking the truth is finding it; and to give up looking is shameful, when what we're looking for is the most beautiful thing there is. As for the charge that writing brings us joy, who is so spiteful as to take that away from us? But if writing is work, whose business is it to put a limit on somebody else's effort? These busybodies who are offended by a labour that isn't at all displeasing to me should be more like Terence's cultivated Chremes: he wants to keep his new neighbour from 'digging or ploughing or carrying anything',⁴ but in so doing deters him from menial labour, not from effort in general.

It's harder to satisfy those who claim to despise Latin texts. But I can't help wondering why their native language fails to please them when serious matters are being discussed, yet they're happy to read plays that have been translated from the Greek. Is there really anyone so opposed to all things Roman that he would spurn the *Medea* of Ennius or the *Antiope* of Pacuvius and insist on enjoying works by Euripides⁵ while rejecting the Latin equivalents? 'Well then,' someone might ask, 'do you expect me to read the *Classmates* of Caecilius or Terence's *Andrian Girl*, rather than Menander's version of either?'⁶

I completely disagree with this point of view. Even if Sophocles wrote the best *Electra* possible, that doesn't mean that the translation of Atilius,⁷ even if bad, shouldn't be read. Lucilius⁸ may have called him an 'iron writer', but he's a writer nevertheless, and thus deserving of an audience. Ignorance of our own poets is due either to sheer laziness or to hypercritical sensitivity. People who don't know our writers don't count as learned in my view. And if we're just as likely to read the opening of Ennius' *Medea* ('If only in the Pelian grove ...') as the same passage in Greek, why object to having the teachings of Plato⁹ on the good and happy life explained in Latin?

Consider this: if we don't limit ourselves to literal translation,¹⁰ but retain the content we like while adding our own judgement and organization, is there really any basis for preferring the Greek instead of something that's both beautifully written and different from the original? And if they say that every topic we discuss has already been

addressed in Greek books, then there's no reason to read most of the Greek authors they consider worth reading. Just to take the Stoics: Chrysippus didn't skip anything, but we still read Diogenes, Antipater, Mnesarchus, Panaetius, and numerous others, not least our friend Posidonius.¹¹ Or this: does Theophrastus give less pleasure when he treats topics already discussed by Aristotle? Do Epicureans hold back from writing as they please about matters addressed by Epicurus and the older writers? If Greeks are read by Greeks on the same topics addressed from a different perspective, why is it that Romans aren't read by Romans?

If I were simply to translate Plato and Aristotle as our poets have translated Greek plays, I wouldn't really be doing much of a service to my fellow citizens by just familiarizing them with those extraordinary geniuses. But this isn't what I've done, although I don't consider myself forbidden from doing so. Certain passages I will simply translate, if I prefer, especially from authors like those just named and if they happen to fit. Ennius used Homer this way, Afranius¹² used Menander. Nor, unlike Lucilius, will I object to being read by everybody. I wish I had a Persius or Scipio, even more so a Rutilius¹³ – critics Lucilius so feared that he claimed to write instead for the people of Tarentum, Consentia and Sicily.¹⁴ He meant it as a joke, as often. But there weren't particularly learned men in those days, whose approval he could strive for, and so his writings are on the frivolous side, with a touch of urbanity but not much depth.

Yet how can I fear any reader, when I dare to write to you, who in philosophy rival even the Greeks? (Although I only do so because you challenged me with that book you sent me¹⁵ on virtue, for which I am deeply grateful.) The real reason some people stay away from Latin books is that they've chanced upon a number that are rough and badly written, worse Latin from bad Greek.¹⁶ And I agree with them, as long as they recognize that Greek books on the same topics aren't worth reading either. But if a work has a sound content and is careful and attractive in style, why not read it? Unless perhaps you want to be taken for a Greek, like Albucius when Scaevola¹⁷ as praetor greeted him in Athens. Lucilius tells the story with charm and wit, having Scaevola speak as follows:

So, Albucius, you'd rather be called a Greek
Than a Roman or a Sabine,
Or fellow townsman of great men
Like the centurions and standard-bearers
Pontius and Tritannius.

As praetor then at Athens, I greet your approach
Just as you wish: '*Chaire*,¹⁸ Titus,' I declare.
The lictors and the rest chime in: '*Chaire*, Titus.'
Which is why Albucius hates me like a foreign foe.

Mucius acted correctly. I can't help wondering what accounts for this snobbish distaste for all things domestic. This isn't the place to go into it, but I do believe and have often stated that the Latin language is not only *not* impoverished, as is commonly thought, but is even richer than the Greek. For once we – or better, any good orator or poet – had models to follow, did we lack any means for making our language richer and more elegant? Because it's recognized that in all the labours and dangers of the Forum I never abandoned the post to which the Roman people assigned me, I feel an obligation to work hard in this area as well so that my fellow citizens can be improved by my efforts. I'm not really interested in doing battle with those who prefer to read Greek – assuming they actually read and aren't just pretending – but I want to be of service to readers who either like to use both languages, or, if they have books in Latin, won't go longing for Greek.

As for those who want us to write on other matters, they should be satisfied, for I have written much (certainly more than any other Roman) and will perhaps write more, if life permits. And yet anyone who has made a habit of reading my philosophical treatises will judge none more worth reading than the present work. For what in life – not to mention in philosophy – is so worth pursuing as the questions treated in these books, namely: what is the goal, the extreme, the end point to which all deliberation concerning happiness and moral action is to be referred? What does nature seek as the best of things worth seeking, what does it shun as the worst of evils? Inasmuch as this topic sparks the greatest disagreement among the most learned men, will anyone think that if I try to discover what's best and truest in every aspect of life, it's somehow beneath whatever dignity he assigns to me?

Leading citizens like Publius Scaevola and Manius Manilius, with Marcus Brutus¹⁹ objecting to both, engage in legal dispute whether, for example, a slave girl's baby counts as a return on an investment. Their debate is both subtle and useful to the citizenry. We gladly read and will continue to read these and other writings of the sort. Will we then neglect writings that concern all of life? The former may be more marketable, but the latter surely have a higher value, even if it's up to readers to set the price. For my part, I think I've examined just about

the entire topic of the ultimate in good and evil in these books, which outline my own position and that of each separate school of philosophy.

Against Fear of Death

Tusculan Disputations, Book 1 (Entire)

Shortly after completing On the Ultimate Good and Evil, Cicero turned to a different style of philosophical writing in the five books of Tusculan Disputations, or school-exercises held at Tusculum, Cicero's country estate. In these books, rather than having famous figures from Roman history articulate distinctive, if incompatible, points of view, he turns himself into a Greek-style teacher, fielding questions from a naive but impressionable student. This structure allows him to 'model' the process of education while also expressing in more forceful terms than elsewhere his own constructive views on key questions of ethics, psychology and human nature.

In the first book of the Tusculan Disputations, presented here in its entirety, Cicero challenges the belief, held by the unnamed pupil and, it would seem, by many readers past and present, that death is an evil to be feared or lamented. After quickly dismissing mythical accounts of punishment in a gloomy afterworld, Cicero takes on the more challenging topic of the existence, nature and mortality of the human soul. Although he ends up arguing in favour of the soul's immortality, it is important to observe how thoroughly physical his discussion is throughout. Cicero does not imagine the soul as an entity of a different order from the body. Drawing on the teaching of Plato and the Stoics, he describes the soul as a material substance indistinguishable from the elemental fire that animates the entire universe. As a particle of the universe the soul is immortal because the universe is immortal.

As with On the Ultimate Good and Evil, Tusculan Disputations opens with an explanation and defence of Cicero's philosophical method by way of preface, but moves quickly to consideration of the key philosophical issues. As is also the case with On the Ultimate Good and Evil, the work is addressed to Marcus Junius Brutus, a Roman senator with philosophical interests of his own, and soon to be the assassin of Julius Caesar. It seems noteworthy that Cicero reports the disputations as having taken place at Tusculum in the summer or autumn of 45 BCE, shortly after Brutus' departure to meet with Caesar. The dedication to Brutus certainly honours the man. But the treatise as a whole would seem to suggest that there is

indeed more to life than power politics.

Free at last from legal obligations and senatorial duties (at least for the most part) I took your advice, Brutus,¹ and returned with great enthusiasm to a course of study I had long intended and long postponed. I decided it was time to shine the light of Latin literature on the discipline known as philosophy, one that encompasses the systematic investigation of all forms of knowledge relevant to the right conduct of life. Not that philosophy can't be grasped if presented by Greek teachers or texts – it's just that I've always held to the judgement that we Romans, as long as we think something worth the effort, either come up with better ideas on our own or improve on what we've received from the Greeks.

We've done a better job of managing our customs and social practices and our private and domestic affairs. And our ancestors, at least, administered public affairs with better laws and institutions. In military matters we've prevailed due to our great courage and even greater discipline. In any endeavour that depends on natural ability as opposed to learning there's no real competition, from Greece or any other nation. Seriousness, consistency, greatness of spirit, honesty, dependability: has anyone come close to matching our ancestors in any of these qualities?

In literature and culture, Greece used to surpass us: an easy conquest when we didn't fight back! Among the Greeks the earliest kind of learned men were poets. If it's true that Homer and Hesiod date to before the foundation of Rome, and Archilochus to the reign of Romulus,² then it was much later that we Romans adopted the poetic art. Livius staged a play roughly 510 years after the founding of Rome, during the consulship of Gaius Claudius (the son of Caecus) and Marcus Tuditanus, in the year prior to the birth of Ennius.³ It took a long time for our people to acknowledge, much less welcome, poets. True, according to the *Origines*,⁴ guests at banquets were once in the habit of singing the praises of distinguished men to the accompaniment of the flute. But a speech by Cato attests that this sort of performance was not considered honourable: he thinks it was a disgrace for Marcus Nobilior to take poets with him into his province. (As we know, Nobilior, when consul, had taken Ennius to Aetolia.) The smaller the honour assigned to poetry the less it was pursued – although those geniuses who did appear didn't fall short of the Greeks' achievement.

Doesn't it stand to reason that if Fabius, who was of the highest

social standing, had been praised for his painting, many a Polyclitus and Parrhasius⁵ would have appeared among our people? Honour sustains the arts. The possibility of glory makes everyone an enthusiast, whereas activities regarded as shameful are always neglected. The Greeks believed that the greatest skill consisted in singing to stringed instruments – which is why Epaminondas, whom I consider a leading man of Greece, reportedly sang and played the harp exceptionally well, but Themistocles,⁶ who years earlier refused to play the lyre at banquets, is regarded as boorish. Not surprisingly, music flourished in Greece. Everybody learned it, anybody who didn't was thought to be uncultured.

They held geometry, too, in especially high regard, with the result that nothing brought greater renown than mathematics; we limited this science to the practical skills of measurement and calculation. On our side, we quickly embraced the orator, not at first for his learning, but for his natural aptitude in speaking, although later for his learning as well. For example, our tradition holds that Galba, Africanus and Laelius⁷ were accomplished speakers, while Cato the Elder, who predated them, was at least enthusiastic. Afterwards came Lepidus, Carbo, the Gracchi,⁸ and then so many outstanding speakers down to our time that little or nothing has to be conceded to the Greeks. Philosophy, on the other hand, has thus far been neglected and gone without the light of Latin letters. My goal is to raise it up and make it burn brightly, so that whatever good I have done for my fellow citizens when fully occupied I might still be of use to them while at leisure.

My project has become more urgent now that a number of hastily composed 'Latin treatises'⁹ have made their appearance. The authors of these works are respectable fellows, but badly educated. Even when they have their arguments in order, they don't express them with any flair. They waste their free time – and do a discredit to literature – when they commit thoughts to writing without knowing how to arrange or enliven them or give any pleasure to the reader. And so they just end up reading each other's books! No one pays attention to them except people who hope to qualify for the same writer's licence. As a result, the respect my oratorical works have earned makes me all the more eager to open the flood-gates of philosophy, from which they too flow forth. Aristotle was already a man of the greatest talent, knowledge and wealth when the fame of Isocrates¹⁰ as a rhetorician prompted him to begin teaching young men how to give speeches and to combine practical wisdom with eloquence. Just so, without

abandoning my long-time interest in eloquence I intend to explore this grander and richer field of study. For I have always believed that the best kind of philosophy addresses the most important topics in a full and dignified style.

To this end, I have gone so far as to hold exercises in the Greek manner. After your recent departure from my Tusculan estate,¹¹ I made an attempt at this genre in the company of various friends. Just as I used to practise legal cases – something I’ve done longer than anyone – these now are the exercises, or ‘declamations’, of my old age. I invited others to propose any topic they wanted to hear, which I would debate with them while sitting or walking.

And so I’ve transcribed five days of scholastic exercises, or *scholae*, as the Greeks call them, into as many books. The procedure was to have the person who proposed a topic give his view, with me then arguing the contrary. As you know, this is the traditional Socratic method of challenging any given opinion, for Socrates thought it the easiest way to approach the truth. For the sake of convenience, I’ll recreate our discussions in dialogue form rather than recapitulate them in narrative. Here then is how they begin:

[The dialogue proper begins with an assertion by an unnamed interlocutor.¹² He and Cicero alternate throughout.]

I think death is something bad.

To the dead or to those who must die?

To both.

As something bad, is it a source of unhappiness?

Of course.

So it’s a source of unhappiness both to those who have already died and to those who are going to die?

Yes.

So there’s no one who’s not unhappy.

No one at all.

To be consistent, then: everyone who has been born and everyone

who will be born is not only unhappy, but always unhappy. For if you say that only those who are going to die are unhappy, you exclude no one who is living, because everyone must die. But at least there would be an end to misery in death. But since you also say that the dead are miserable, then we are born into everlasting misery. It follows that those who died 100,000 years ago, in effect anyone who has been born, is miserable.

That's exactly what I think.

So tell me: is it three-headed Cerberus that frightens you? The groaning of Cocytus? The boat-ride across Acheron? Tantalus 'all but dead from thirst skimming the surface of the water with his chin'? Or is it Sisyphus, who 'sweating rolls his boulder, yet from his struggle profits nought'? Perhaps too those stern judges, Minos and Rhadamanthus?¹³ No Lucius Crassus or Marcus Antonius¹⁴ will defend you in their court! Although your case will be heard before Greek judges, you won't be able to call on Demosthenes¹⁵ for help. By yourself before an immense audience, you'll have to argue your own defence. Perhaps this is what you fear, and why you think death is an unending evil?

Please. Do you think I'm crazy? That I really believe those things?

You mean you don't?

Of course not.

Too bad!

Why? What do you mean?

Because I could be quite eloquent in disproving them!

Who couldn't, on a topic like that? What's the challenge in refuting the fictions of poets and painters? Philosophers have filled books arguing against such stories. A waste of time, if you ask me, because nobody is so crazy as to be frightened by them.

Well then, if the Underworld doesn't contain any unhappy souls, it doesn't contain anybody.

Exactly what I think.

So where are they, the ones you call miserable or unhappy, what place do they inhabit? If they exist, they can't be nowhere.

But I think they are nowhere.

So they don't exist?

Not the way you mean. Still, I think they're unhappy for the simple reason that they're nobodies.

Now I wish you did fear Cerberus instead of making such hasty claims.

What do you mean?

You say the same creature is and is not. Where is your good sense? For the very one you say is miserable you also say does not exist.

I'm not dull enough to say *that*.

Well then what are you saying?

That Marcus Crassus, to take an example, is unhappy, because when he died he lost all of his money; or that Pompey¹⁶ is wretched, because he lost so much glory; that everyone is unhappy who has no share of the light around us.

You're talking in circles again! People must exist to be unhappy. But you just now stated that the dead don't exist. And if they don't exist, they can't be anything – not even unhappy.

Maybe I'm not saying what I really mean. What you just described – not existing when once you did exist – that, I think, is the worst kind of misery.

Really? Worse than never having existed at all? By that logic, those who are not yet born are already miserable because they don't exist, and we, if we are going to be miserable after death, were already miserable before we were born. Yet I don't recall being miserable before I was born: if you have a better memory I'd like to know what you remember about yourself.

You're just joking around, as if I were saying that those who have not been born are miserable, rather than that those who have died are miserable.

So you are saying that the dead exist?

No, I am saying that they are miserable because they do not exist, although they once did.

Don't you see that your own words contradict you? For what could be more contradictory than to claim that someone who does not exist is not only miserable but is anything at all? When you go past the Capuan Gate and see the tombs of Calatinus, the Scipios, the Servilii and the Metelli,¹⁷ do you consider them to be miserable?

Since you insist, I won't say they're miserable, only that they're miserable insofar as they do not exist.

So then you don't actually claim 'Marcus Crassus is miserable', but you do use the expression, 'miserable Marcus Crassus'.

Yes, that's it!

Don't you understand that in this type of discussion you have to propose that something either is or is not the case? Do you have even an inkling of how dialectic works? This is standard procedure: every proposition (for the time being, that's my translation of the Greek word *axioma* – if I come up with a better term later, I'll use it) states a claim that is either true or false. So when you use the expression 'miserable Marcus Crassus', either you say, in effect 'Crassus is miserable' so that we can judge whether the claim is true or false, or you say nothing at all.

All right, then, I'll grant that the dead aren't miserable, since you have forced me to admit that those who don't exist cannot possibly be miserable. So what? Aren't the living miserable, since we have to die? What joy can there be in life if day and night we are forced to consider the inevitable approach of death?

Wow! Do you know how much evil you've just removed from the human condition?

How so?

Well, if death really were a source of misery to the dead, then we'd acquire unending evil just by being alive. As it is, I see a finish-line, which, once we cross, there's nothing left to fear. If I'm not mistaken,

you agree with the saying of Epicharmus¹⁸ – a sharp and witty fellow, as we expect of a Sicilian.

What saying? I don't know what you mean.

I'll try to put it in Latin – for you know that I don't like to cite Greek phrases when I'm speaking Latin any more than the other way around.

And rightly so. But get on with it: what's the saying of Epicharmus you refer to?

'I have no desire to die, but I count my death as nothing.'

Oh yes, I'm familiar with the Greek version. But since you've forced me to concede that the dead are not miserable, make me agree – if you can – that having to die is not a reason to be miserable.

There's no challenge at all in what you ask. But I'm making an even bigger claim.

What do you mean, there's no challenge? What's this bigger claim of yours?

Just this: since after death there's nothing bad, then death itself isn't bad. You admit that the very next moment after death has nothing bad about it. Thus, even the necessity of dying isn't bad, because it's just the necessity of arriving at a condition that we agree is not bad.

Explain this more fully, please. Your argument is so prickly it makes me want to give in rather than consent. Still, what's the bigger claim you say you're making?

I intend to show, if I can, that death not only is not an evil, but is in fact a good.

Well, I don't insist on such an argument, but I'd like to hear it all the same. Even if you don't prove what you set out to, you'll still be showing that death is not an evil. What's more, I won't interrupt you. I'd just as soon hear a continuous presentation.

But surely you'll answer if I ask you a question?

Of course – it would be arrogant not to. Still, I'd prefer that you not ask unless it's absolutely necessary.

All right, I'll play by your rules, and I'll try to explain things as you wish. But I'm no Pythian Apollo,¹⁹ making pronouncements that are fixed and unchanging. I'll speak as a mere mortal, one of many, developing likely arguments through the use of reasonable inference.²⁰ I don't have the capacity to go beyond my perception of what seems to be true. We can leave certainty to people who claim it's possible and who boast of their own wisdom.

Do as you think best. As for me, I'm all ears.

Well then, the first order of business is to discern what death – this thing that seems so familiar – actually is. Some think it's the departure of the soul from the body, others believe that there is no departure, rather that the body and the soul die together and the soul is extinguished in the body. And of those who think the soul departs, some say it dissipates immediately, some say it lasts a long time, others that it lasts forever. Furthermore, there's much disagreement as to what the soul is, where it is, where it comes from. For some the heart is the soul: that's where we get the expressions 'heartless', 'heart-sick' and 'one at heart'. It's why Nasica, a foresighted man who was twice consul, is called 'all heart', and Aelius Sextus²¹ is known as 'a cunning, keen-hearted fellow.'

Empedocles²² thinks the soul is the blood flowing through the heart, while others believe that a specific portion of the brain constitutes the lion's share of the soul. Others deny that either the heart or part of the brain is the soul, but assert that the soul takes up residence in either the heart or the brain. Still others believe that breath (*anima*) is soul (*animus*), as the interchangeability of the Latin terms makes clear. For we use expressions like 'breathe one's last', 'soulful' and 'spirited' without differentiation. The very word for soul or mind (*animus*) is derived from *anima*, meaning 'breath'. To Zeno²³ the Stoic the soul is fire. Claims of this sort, concerning the heart, brain, life-force and fire are commonplace. The rest are attributed to individuals, for example a much older view, later restated by Aristoxenus,²⁴ who was both a musician and a philosopher, has it that the soul is a kind of tension of the body, similar to what's called harmony in singing or the playing of a lyre. On this view, movement is prompted by the nature and configuration of the whole body, just as sounds are in singing.

Aristoxenus didn't stray from his own area of technical competence, yet he managed to arrive at a definition that had been asserted and clarified by Plato a long time earlier. Xenocrates denied that the soul

has either shape or substance, but instead identified it with number, which, in the earlier view of Pythagoras, has the greatest power in nature. Xenocrates' teacher Plato depicted the soul as tripartite,²⁵ placing its leading part – reason – in the head, as if on a citadel. He wanted the other two parts – anger and desire – to obey reason, and confined them to specific locations, placing anger in the chest and desire under the diaphragm.

In contrast Dicaearchus, in the three books of his *Corinthian Discourse*, has many learned men debate in Book 1, but introduces as speaker in the remaining books a certain Pherecrates of Phthia who claims to be descended from Deucalion.²⁶ He says that there is no such thing as soul, that the very word is meaningless. The terms 'animal' and 'animate' are also wrongly applied, since there's no soul (*animus*) or life-force (*anima*) in humans or beasts; rather, all the force through which we move or experience sensation is spread through all living bodies equally and cannot be separated from the body since it has no independent existence. This power is purely bodily, a configuration that makes growth and sensation possible through natural regulation.

Aristotle, who in genius and industry outranks everyone (excluding Plato, as always), after acknowledging the standard four elements, decided there had to be a fifth element as well, of which mind is composed. In his view, thinking, anticipating, learning, teaching and discovering, the ability to remember so many things, loving, hating, desiring, fearing, suffering, rejoicing and other faculties of this sort just cannot be found in the four standard elements. He supplies a fifth, unnamed element, and uses the new term *endelecheia* or 'self-actualization', to refer to the soul itself as a sort of continuous, unbroken motion.²⁷

Unless something has escaped me, that's pretty much the full range of opinions about the soul. We can forget about Democritus²⁸ – a great man, no doubt, but one who has the soul being formed from the random collisions of light, spherical particles. To him and his followers nothing exists that isn't made up of a whirl of atoms!

As to which of these teachings is true, it will take a god to determine. The real question is: which is most likely to be true? So, do we prefer to evaluate them one by one, or return to our main theme?

I'd like us to do both, if possible, although it's difficult to combine the two. If we can free ourselves from fear of death without analysing these theories, let's do so. Otherwise, if it's impossible to avoid untangling this topic of souls, let's deal with that first, if you're

willing, and the other matter at another time.

The approach I think you prefer is also fine with me: for my argument will show that whichever of the theories I've described is true, death either is not an evil or is even a good. Regardless whether the soul is heart or blood or brain, surely, because it is body, it will perish together with the rest of body. If it's the breath of life, it will dissipate, I suppose; if fire, it will die out; if it's the harmony of Aristoxenus, it will come undone. What's there to say about Dicaearchus, who claims there's no soul at all? According to all of these teachings, nothing can matter to anyone after death. For sensation will end when life does. And nothing makes any difference to a being that lacks sensation. The remaining opinions offer hope – in case it appeals to you – that souls will be able to proceed to the sky as if to their permanent residence once they have left their bodies.

It does appeal to me! This is how I want things to be. And even if they aren't, I still want to be convinced that they are.

But why do you need my help? Do you think I can outdo Plato in eloquence? Take the time to read his book about the soul.²⁹ You'll find nothing lacking.

That's just what I've done – any number of times. Yet somehow while I am reading, I agree, but when I set the book aside and begin to think on my own about the immortality of souls, all my conviction slips away.

Well then: do you grant that either souls persist after death or they pass away at the time of death?

Granted.

And if they persist?

I acknowledge that they are happy.

But if they come to an end?

They aren't miserable, for they don't even exist. I conceded that much a while ago when you forced me to.

Then how and why do you insist that death is a source of misery? It

makes us happy if our souls live on, or at least not miserable if they lack sensation.

Well then, if it isn't too much trouble, explain how souls live on after death. If you can't do that – I agree it's difficult – then show how death is in no way bad. My fear isn't that it's bad to be without sensation, but that it's bad to be obliged to lose sensation at some point in the future.

If nothing else, the best authorities allow us to reach the conclusion you want. They can and should prevail in every kind of dispute, not least because of their great antiquity. The closer they were to the origin of the world and the period when men were born from the gods, the better they were, it would seem, at discerning the truth.

For men of old – the ones Ennius calls *casci*³⁰ – shared a single, innate belief, namely that sensation remains after death and a human being is not so completely destroyed upon departing from life as to perish altogether. This conviction can be inferred from a great deal of evidence, including pontifical law and burial rituals. As creatures of great intelligence, men of old wouldn't have devoted such observance to burial rites or punished their violation so ruthlessly if they didn't believe that death, rather than bringing total and utter destruction, is instead a kind of journey or transformation of life, which leads distinguished men and women to heaven while the rest continue an existence on earth.

This explains why our people believe that 'Romulus leads his life in heaven with the gods',³¹ as Ennius put it, approving of the story. Hercules is regarded as a great and powerful deity among the Greeks, and indeed, his fame has spread to our people and even to the edges of the inhabited world. So too, Liber,³² son of Semele. And the same kind of story is told of the sons of Tyndarus: it is said that they aided and announced the Roman people's victory in battle.³³ Think of Ino,³⁴ daughter of Cadmus: called Leukothea by the Greeks, isn't she regarded by our people as the goddess Matuta? Not to go on at length, but isn't pretty much all of heaven packed with human progeny?

In fact, if I examine stories of old and from these try to extract what writers from Greece have reported, it becomes evident that those regarded as the greatest gods departed for heaven from within our midst. Ask yourself: whose tombs are on display in Greece? You've been initiated: call to mind what's taught at the Mysteries.³⁵ Then at last you'll realize how widespread this belief is. People of old, who

hadn't yet learned what natural science would investigate much later, believed just so much as they came to know at nature's prompting. Not grasping the order and causal sequence of the universe, they were often affected, especially at night, by visions in which it appeared that those who had departed from life kept on living.

Along these lines, the strongest reason we have for believing in the gods is that there is no race so monstrous, no person so savage, that news of the gods has not entered their minds. Many have perverted ideas about the gods, in line with their mistaken customs, but all acknowledge the existence and power of divinity. There was no discussion or assembly that established this belief; it wasn't affirmed by rules or laws – although on every topic universal agreement among people ought to be treated as natural law. Who is there who does not mourn the death of those near to him primarily because he thinks they have been deprived of the benefits of life? Take away that belief and you take away mourning. People might feel hurt and distressed at their own loss, but that's not the reason they go into mourning. Sorrowful weeping and lamentation communicate sadness that is based on our judgement that someone we cherished has been deprived of the good things of life – and senses that very loss. And it's nature, not reason or philosophical instruction, that leads us to have these feelings.

But the best indication that it's natural to believe in the immortality of the soul is the deep, universal concern for what will happen after death. 'He plants trees that won't bear fruit for another generation,' as the poet says in *Classmates*.³⁶ What's the point, if future generations don't matter to him? And yet a responsible farmer will plant trees, even though he'll never see them bear a single olive. Won't a great man plant laws, practices, a commonwealth? Why have children, perpetuate the family name, adopt sons, write and update a will? What else do funeral monuments and epitaphs indicate except that we're contemplating the future?

Isn't it obvious that an ideal specimen of a given natural type should be taken from the best that type has to offer? Within the human species, who has a better nature than those who believe they were born to help, protect and guard other humans? Hercules went to live among the gods. He'd never have gone if he hadn't paved the way while he was living among mortals. This is an old belief that's treated as sacred by all peoples. Why do we suppose that in our own country so many outstanding men have died for the sake of the Republic? Did they think their reputation was going to end along with their life?

Surely no one ever offers to die on behalf of his country unless he has great hope for immortality.

Granted, Themistocles experienced a period of rest. So did Epaminondas. So – to seek other than old and foreign examples – have I. But somehow there remains in our minds a vision, as it were, of generations to come: a vision that appears most readily and blazes forth most intensely in those with the greatest talent and deepest soul. Take away that vision, and who would be so deranged as to live a life of constant struggle and danger?

So far I've been talking about political leaders. But don't poets also wish to be ennobled after death? What else explains the following lines?

Behold, o citizens, the magnificent image of aged Ennius.
He fixed in writing the deeds of your ancestors.³⁷

Ennius demands payment in glory from men whose ancestors he adorned with glory. He also said: 'No one will honour me with tears.' Why? Because, 'Alive I flutter on the lips of men.'³⁸

And it's not just poets – craftsmen, too, wish to be honoured after death. Why else did Phidias include a self-portrait on the shield of Minerva,³⁹ even though he had been forbidden to inscribe his name? Don't our friends the philosophers put their names on the very books they write condemning the quest for fame?

But if the consensus of all is, in effect, the voice of nature, and everyone everywhere agrees that something of the departed remains, then we too must form the same judgement. Furthermore, if we accept that those who excel in talent and virtue, being naturally the best, are also best able to recognize the power of nature, then, inasmuch as they are the people most attentive to posterity, it seems reasonable to infer that they expect to have some awareness even after death.

We naturally believe that gods exist, but we discern their qualities through the exercise of reason. Just so, we share a universal feeling that souls live on, but we must use reason to determine where and in what condition. Ignorance about these matters has led to the invention of an underworld containing the terrors that you – with good reason – evidently despise. Because bodies fall to the ground and are covered with earth, or humus (which is where we get our word 'inhumation'), people assumed that the dead spend the remainder of their existence underground. This belief in turn has led to major errors, which the poets compound.

For example, the crowd that's gathered in the theatre – women and

children among them – gets all worked up on hearing a dreadful dirge:

Lo, I arrive just now from Acheron, by a pathway steep and long,
Past caverns crowded with sharp hanging rocks,
Dense with fog of infernal souls.⁴⁰

Misguided belief (which seems to have died out by now) used to be so powerful that even though people understood perfectly well that corpses had been cremated, they still imagined events taking place in the Underworld that couldn't happen without bodies. They couldn't grasp the idea of souls having an independent existence, so they sought to give them shape or structure. Hence the whole *nekuia*, or Underworld-narrative, of Homer, and the *nekuia* conjured by my friend Appius, down near lake Avernus.⁴¹

The spirits are summoned, shrouded in dark shadows;
Images of the dead at the mouth of deep Acheron, congealed blood.

They even have these images speak, although speech isn't feasible when you have no tongue or palate, no jaws to use, or torso, or lungs. They were unable to perceive with their minds, but relied entirely on their eyes.

Still, it takes a great talent to isolate the mind from the senses and to redirect thought from its habitual patterns. Although I'm sure others had the same view at some point during the long centuries, Pherecydes of Syros⁴² was the first to commit to writing the claim that the souls of humans are eternal. To be sure, he himself is quite early, dating to the time when a man of my clan⁴³ ruled Rome. His disciple Pythagoras, who came to Italy during the reign of Tarquin the Proud,⁴⁴ played an important part in strengthening this belief. He was held in high regard throughout Magna Graecia,⁴⁵ as it was called, as a teacher and a personality. For many centuries afterward, people who called themselves Pythagoreans were so well respected that no one else was thought to be learned.

But to get back to the early Pythagoreans: they believed that reason consisted exclusively of what could be explained through numbers or geometrical figures. It's said that Plato came to Italy to meet Pythagoras⁴⁶ and that he learned all the Pythagorean teachings and that, at least initially, he had the same belief and offered the same explanation of the eternity of souls as did Pythagoras. Still, unless you object, let's just move along and put behind us all this hope for immortality.

What! Do you mean to abandon me just when you've raised my

expectations so high! Good lord! I'd rather go wrong with Plato than be right with the others. Besides, I know how highly you regard him; indeed, I owe my own admiration to your example.

Excellent! To be honest, I'd be happy to go astray with him as well.

So then we'll set aside our usual doubt? or do as always?

Not in this case. For the mathematicians⁴⁷ prove that the earth, which is situated in the middle of the universe, occupies in comparison to the vastness of the heavens the space of a mere point, which they call by the Greek term *kentron*. In addition, they show that the four natural elements that generate everything have, in effect, distinct and separate directions of motion. Earth and water by their own weight and inclination descend along a perpendicular into land and sea. Just as they are brought to the mid-point of the universe by their heavy weight, so the remaining two elements – fire and air –, following straight lines fly upward into the heavens, whether by their very nature seeking what is lofty or because being naturally lighter they are repelled by what's heavier. All of which being the case, it ought to be clear that souls, whether animate, that is breath-like, or fiery, are carried upward upon departing the body.

But if soul is number⁴⁸ – a claim that's more subtle than clear – or if there's a fifth element, nameless but not unintelligible, these too would be so much finer and purer that they would put a great distance between themselves and the earth. Soul, therefore, is of one of these substances, unless it's the energizing mind concealed in the heart or brain or Empedoclean blood. Again we'll pass over Dicaearchus and his student and contemporary Aristoxenus, learned men to be sure, but the first apparently never felt sad, for he believed he had no soul, and the other took such pleasure in his own songs that he tried to locate soul in them! Now we can agree that harmony is based on intervals between sounds, and that the varied arrangement of intervals produces many different harmonies. But how the arrangement of the limbs and structure of the body can produce harmony in the absence of soul, I don't understand. As knowledgeable as he was, he'd have been better off leaving these matters to his teacher Aristotle – and teaching Aristotle to sing. The Greek proverb says it well: 'Stick to the skill you know.'

And let's just forget about the chance collision of smooth, round atoms, even though Democritus insists that they grow warm and

capable of breath and animation. If the soul consists of any of the four substances that constitute the universe, it consists of fiery air, as Panaetius⁴⁹ recognized, and so it necessarily seeks loftier realms. For these two elements, fire and air, experience no downward motion, but constantly move upward. Thus, if the soul dissipates, it does so far from earth; if it survives and maintains its arrangement, then it's necessary all the more for it to be carried to the upper atmosphere, and for the thick and dense mist that is closer to earth to be torn away and separated from it. For the soul is warmer, or better yet, more fiery than mist, which, as I just said, is thick and dense. This composition of the soul is evident from the fact that our bodies, even though they consist of terrestrial elements, grow warm from the soul's fire.

In addition, the soul easily escapes from this mist, as I call our atmosphere, slicing its way through. Nothing moves faster than soul, no speed can compete with *its* speed. If the soul remains uncorrupted and unchanged, it follows logically that it will penetrate and pierce through all of the sky where clouds and storms and winds move about, a region that is moist and misty due to the exhalations of the earth. But when the soul has passed that region and reached and recognized the part of the universe with a nature like its own, where fires are formed from a mixture of gentle air and the tempered warmth of the sun, it stops and puts an end to its upward momentum. Encountering a lightness and heat just like its own, as if on a perfectly balanced scale it does not move in any direction and it at last occupies its natural place of repose, within a substance similar to itself. There, lacking nothing, it will be nourished and sustained by the same matter that sustains and nourishes the stars.⁵⁰

And because we've grown hot with bodily urges and lusts of every sort and burned against rivals who possess what we desire, we'll surely attain happiness once we leave our bodies behind and cease to experience desire and competition. At present we make time for study and observation whenever our responsibilities are reduced; in the future, all the more freely will we devote our entire being to examining and contemplating the universe. Our minds by nature have an insatiable longing to see the truth; and the very nature of the places we've reached, by making knowledge of the heavens that much easier, will increase our desire to know.

For it was the beauty of the heavens that kindled even on earth a love of wisdom, a paternal or ancestral (to use the term of Theophrastus⁵¹) passion for knowledge. Indeed, it will give special enjoyment to those who, though surrounded by mist during their time

on earth, nevertheless longed to peer through it with the eyes of the mind.

If in the present day and age a traveller thinks he's accomplished something when he's seen the Hellespont and the narrows traversed by the Argo, the ship so-named because it 'carried the Argive elite, to seek the gilded fleece of the ram', or viewed the expanse of Ocean 'where roiling wave parts Europe from Libya',⁵² just imagine the spectacle when we are at last able to gaze upon the entire earth, observing its placement, shape and boundaries, its habitable regions, not to mention tracts uncultivated due to extremes of heat or cold.

For even now it is not with our eyes that we discern what we see. The natural philosophers and the doctors, who have observed these matters directly, give the following explanation: the body lacks sensation, the senses are only tubular pathways from the seat of the soul to the eyes, ears and nose. Often enough, if we are deep in thought or suffering from some illness, we fail to see or hear, even if our eyes and ears are open and undamaged. Evidently, then, the soul does the seeing and hearing, not the sense-organs, which are more like windows for the soul. The mind can't sense anything with them except what it actively attends to. Aren't you surprised that with the same mind we grasp different percepts, such as colour, flavour, heat, smell, sound? The soul could never recognize them through its five messengers if they didn't bring all their reports back to it, and if it didn't act as sole judge of all. And so without a doubt we'll see things much more clearly and distinctly once our soul, being free, has reached its natural destination.

Although nature has fabricated the little tubes that run from body to soul with a most cunning kind of skill, in our present condition they are blocked one way or another by congealed earthly matter. But when nothing exists except soul, no obstacle will prevent it from seeing each entity as it is. Were it necessary, I could go on at length about the many and varied marvels the soul will encounter in the heavens.

Indeed, as often as I reflect upon such matters, I'm amazed at the arrogance of philosophers who express admiration for natural science⁵³ and joyfully give thanks to their founder and leader, even venerating him as a god on the grounds that he has liberated them from cruel masters, eternal terror, dread by night and day. What terror? What dread? What old crone fears the things you say you would fear if you didn't study natural philosophy? Those 'deep Acheruntian realms of Orcus, regions clouded with shadows, pale with

death'.⁵⁴ What a disgrace for a philosopher to brag about not fearing this sort of thing or about proving it false! It gives you some measure of their native intelligence if this is what they would believe if they hadn't studied philosophy.

Their one noteworthy accomplishment is that they've brought themselves to believe that when death comes, they will perish utterly. Assuming the claim is true – I'm not arguing against it – where's the cause for rejoicing? Why the bragging? I still see no reason not to accept the judgement of Pythagoras and Plato. Even if Plato offered no logical explanation, his authority would convince me, so much do I respect the man. In reality, he introduced so many arguments that he seemed eager to persuade others, and certainly convinced himself.

Still, the majority maintain the opposite and hold that souls are punished, like prisoners condemned to death. There's no good reason for them to reject the eternity of souls – except their own inability to grasp and understand what a soul would be like in the absence of a body. As if they knew what it's like when it's in the body, what shape it has, or size or location! Tell me, if everything now hidden in a living person could be seen, does it seem likely that the soul, too, would be visible, or is it so fine-grained that it would escape detection?

These are the kinds of things people who deny the possibility of soul without body ought to reflect upon: they'll see what they understand of the soul in the body. When I think about the nature of the soul, I find it harder and more obscure to imagine what the soul is like in the body, as if in somebody else's home, than what it's like when it returns to the open sky and arrives at its own place of residence. If it's not true that we can't understand the nature of something we've never seen, then surely we can form an idea of divinity and divine soul freed from body. In fact, Dicaearchus and Aristoxenus denied the very existence of the soul on the grounds that it was difficult to know its nature or characteristics. No doubt it is very difficult to see the soul with the soul – which is surely the point of Apollo's pronouncement, 'know thyself'.⁵⁵ He's not telling us to know our limbs or stature or appearance. We aren't simply bodies and in speaking to you I don't speak to your body alone. When he says 'know thyself' he means 'know your soul'. The body is just a vessel or receptacle of the soul. Whatever action is taken by your soul is taken by you. Therefore, if knowing yourself weren't the act of a god, then this wise saying wouldn't be attributed to a god.

But if the soul doesn't know its own nature, tell me, does it even

know that it exists? That it experiences movement? This is how Plato reasons, as he has Socrates explain in *Phaedrus*, and as I reported in the sixth book of my treatise *On the Republic*.⁵⁶

What always moves, is eternal. What causes something else to move or is set in motion by something else, when the movement ends, its own life ends. Therefore only that which moves itself, never being stopped by itself, never stops moving. It is the starting point and origin of movement for everything else that moves. But a starting point has no beginning. For from the starting point, everything proceeds, it can't proceed from anything else. It would not be a starting point if it had its origin elsewhere. But if it never begins, it never ends. For a beginning that has ended cannot be restarted by something else, nor will it create something else from itself, if indeed it's the case that everything starts from a beginning. Thus it turns out that the beginning of motion is that which moves itself. It cannot be born or die, otherwise all of the heavens and all of nature necessarily collapse and come to a halt. It cannot acquire any other force by which it can be moved anew. Since it's clear then that what sets itself in motion is eternal, who could fail to attribute such a nature to the soul? Anything set in motion by external impetus is inanimate; what is animate moves by its own interior impulse. This is the nature and power of soul. And because it is the one thing out of all that sets itself in motion, then surely it was never born and will last forever.

Let them combine their forces, all those plebeian philosophers (for that's what they deserve to be called for disagreeing with Plato, Socrates and their school); they'll never explain anything so elegantly; they won't even understand the subtlety of the argument. The soul senses its own motion; when it does, it senses that it has been moved by its own power, not by anything else, and that it can never be deprived of itself. Which means it is eternal – unless you have something to say in contradiction.

I'll gladly admit that no objection even enters my mind. That's how strongly I agree with your argument.

Really? You don't think poorly of the claim that human souls contain a divine element? If I could see how souls are born, then I'd also see how they pass away. For it seems possible to explain the origin and composition of blood, bile, phlegm, sinews, veins, the totality of the body. As for the soul, if its only purpose were to allow us to live, I would consider human life to be sustained in much the same manner

as a vine or tree; for we describe these too as ‘living’. Again, if the human soul has no aim but seeking and avoiding, then it is no different from that of beasts.

But in the first place it has memory, which is unlimited and encompasses many different matters. Plato even thinks it recalls prior life. In the *Meno*, Socrates quizzes a young boy about measuring a square.⁵⁷ The boy responds so readily that step by step he reaches the same answer as if he had studied geometry. Which leads Socrates to conclude that the boy has been remembering, not learning. He develops this topic more carefully in the dialogue he held on the day he died. He explains that a person, whatever the subject of his ignorance, by responding to well-put questions makes clear that he is not learning but recognizing through recollection. This couldn’t happen, according to Socrates, unless already in childhood we had inborn and as it were imprinted notions of all sorts, which he calls *ennoiai*, or preconceptions, that is, unless the soul had already pulsed with knowledge prior to entering the body.⁵⁸

And since, as Plato argues in all his dialogues, nothing truly exists (for he thinks that things that come into being and perish don’t exist; only what is constantly the same – which he calls *idea* and we call form – can be said to exist), then the soul can’t have learned anything while in the body, rather it already has knowledge when it enters the body; hence there’s no reason to be surprised by the multiplicity of objects of cognition. Yet the soul doesn’t see things clearly when it has abruptly entered an unfamiliar and chaotic new home; only when it has gathered and restored itself does it come to awareness again through recollection. Thus learning is nothing other than remembering.

But I’m amazed by memory for another, even greater reason. How is it that we remember? How define memory’s power? What’s the source of its strength? I’m not asking about the extraordinary memory of Simonides or Theodectes, or Cineas, the ambassador from Pyrrhus to the Senate, or even that of more recent men, such as Charmadas and Metrodorus of Scepsis, or even our friend Hortensius.⁵⁹ I mean normal human memory, especially as employed in any important pursuit or skill. Such mental power is difficult to quantify: people hold so many things in memory!

Where am I going with these remarks? I think it’s essential that we understand the source of memory’s power. It doesn’t come from the heart or blood or brain or atoms. I don’t know if it consists of breath or fire, and I’m not embarrassed (unlike others) to admit that I don’t

know. But if I can make one bold claim on this difficult topic, I insist that whether the soul is air or fire, it is certainly divine. I ask you: is there anything else composed of earth or mist or foggy sky that has the power of memory? You may not know what memory is, but you know its characteristics. And if you don't know its characteristics, you at least know how great it is. What then? Are we to imagine that it's a holding-capacity of the soul? that we pour what we remember, as if into a pot? How absurd! What basin – or other image of the soul – can be meant? Does anything have sufficient volume? Or are we to think the soul receives impressions, like wax, and memory consists of traces left upon the mind? But how are traces of words and objects possible? Their number must surely be immense if they can represent so many things.

Finally, consider the power of the mind to pursue the unknown, its capacity to create or invent. Do you think this ability is a compound of earthly matter, subject to death and decay? What about the person who exercised the highest type of wisdom, as Pythagoras would have it, and gave names to everything? or herded scattered men together and called them to lives of companionship, or divided the infinity of possible sounds into a small set of letters, or observed the paths of the stars, their forward motions and their standstills? All such men were great. Even greater were those who discovered food, clothing, shelter, ordered behaviour, and defences against wild animals. They tamed and civilized our species; thanks to them we passed from mere crafting of necessities to more elegant forms of life.

For example, harmonious variation of sound brought great pleasure to our ears; we gazed up at the stars, both those that stay in fixed locations and those called planets (or the wandering ones – although in fact they don't). The man who took note of their movements and revolutions showed how similar his own soul is to the one that created the stars in heaven. I refer to Archimedes, who by interweaving the paths of the moon, the sun and the five planets in his sphere, accomplished the same thing as the Platonic god in the *Timaeus*, who so fashioned the dome of the heavens that one revolution with varying speeds could integrate vastly different movements.⁶⁰ It can't have happened in the heavens without a deity, and Archimedes couldn't have reproduced those movements in his sphere without godlike talent.

In my view none of the more noteworthy human achievements has come about without divine influence. I don't think a poet can proclaim his deep and ample song without heavenly inspiration.

Eloquence needs a higher power to release its flood of resonant language and persuasive sayings. As for philosophy, the mother of all the arts, what else is it but the gift of the gods (to use Plato's expression) or their discovery (to use mine)? Philosophy led us first to worship of the gods; then to justice among men, which has its origin in the sociability of the human species; next it disciplined and strengthened the mind. It clears the fog from the brain as from the eyes, so that we see everything above and below, first, last and in the middle range.

In short, the very capacity for great and valuable achievements is divine. How else would we describe memory of words and deeds, or the power of invention? We can't imagine anything greater, even in the life of a god. For I don't believe they enjoy nectar and ambrosia or Youthful Beauty bringing them their drinks. And I don't accept Homer's story that Ganymede⁶¹ was carried off by the gods to be cup-bearer to Jupiter on account of his looks – without some good reason for Laomedon to be so badly wronged.

Homer just made these things up, attributing human practices to the gods. I'd rather attribute to us divine practices like growing, knowing, discovering and remembering. It's our soul that's divine, I'd say; or, as Euripides boldly put it, 'our soul is god'.⁶² It's clear that if god is breath or fire, so too is the human soul. Just as heavenly nature is free of earth and water, human soul also lacks these elements. And even if there is a fifth element, as introduced by Aristotle, it's the element of gods and souls.

This is the view I expressed in my *Consolation*,⁶³ as follows:

It's impossible to locate an earthly origin of souls. There's nothing mixed or compounded in souls, they're not earth or made of earth. They're not even moist or airy or fiery. There's nothing in these elements that accounts for the power of memory, mind or thought, that recalls the past, foresees the future or comprehends the present. These faculties are divine; you won't find a way for them to get to man except from god. The natural power of the soul is therefore unique, distinct from the usual and familiar elements. Whatever it is that thinks, knows, lives and grows must be heavenly, divine and therefore eternal. And god, who is recognized by us, can only be recognized by a mind that is free and unencumbered, distinct from any mortal compound, sensing all and setting all in motion, itself endowed with eternal movement. The human mind consists of the same element, the same nature.

Well then, where is this mind you speak of, what is it like?

Where is your mind and what is it like? Can you tell? Or do you mean that if I don't have every resource for understanding that I would like to have, I'm not allowed to use the ones I do have? The soul isn't powerful enough to see itself. Like the eye, it sees not itself but other things. Its failure to see its own shape is a trivial point (although it's even possible it does see it, but let's set that argument aside): it undoubtedly recognizes its own power, keenness, memory, motion, speed – qualities that really matter and that mark it as divine and eternal. It's hardly worth asking what it looks like or where it dwells.

For example, when we see the brilliance of the sky, then its speedy rotation, too quick to process in our thoughts; the passage of day and night; the fourfold change of seasons as they ripen crops and temper bodies; the sun, leader and manager of all, and the moon with its phases that mark the calendar and specify the days; the five planets that in a single orbit across twelve zones maintain the same course although their velocities differ; the beauty of the sky at night, everywhere adorned with constellations; the earth poised at the mid-point of the universe, its lands rising from the seas, its two cultivated zones, one, which we inhabit,

Placed beneath the northern pole, where the wailing wind
Sends shivers and heaps high the frigid snows,⁶⁴

the other in the south, unknown to us, called *antichthon*, or 'anti-earth', by the Greeks; and all the rest that remains uncultivated, either frozen with snow or burning with heat, while here where we live in due time

The sky is ever radiant, trees put forth leaves,
Shoots ripen on happy vines,
Branches bend low from the weight of fruit,
Stalks swell with grain, flowers abound,
Fountains gush, meadows deck themselves with grass;⁶⁵

also the multitude of beasts, useful for eating, ploughing the fields, carrying loads, clothing our bodies; the human race itself, observer of the sky, worshipper of the gods; all the lands and seas at the service of man's needs –

When we observe these and countless other things, can we really doubt that some being presides over them, either a creator, if they all came into being (as Plato thinks), or, if they have always existed (the view of Aristotle), then a manager for such a vast endowment?

So, although you don't see the mind of man, just as you don't see god, still, you come to know god from his works; and you come to

know the divine force of mind in memory and creativity and the flash of movement and all the beauty of virtue. Where is the mind? For my part, I'm certain it's in the head, and I can give reasons for my belief. As for the location of the soul, let's worry about that some other time. Without doubt, it's in you. What is its nature? Distinctly its own, I think. But let it be fiery or breathy, it doesn't affect what we're discussing. Just understand this: as you acknowledge god, although you don't know his location or appearance, so you must acknowledge your soul, even though you don't know its location or shape.

Unless we're completely obtuse when it comes to physics, we can't have any doubt with respect to our view of the soul. There's no mixture in souls, no coalescence, no linking, no compounding, no double nature: since that's the case, it can't be separated, divided, picked apart, or torn asunder – and so it can't perish. For perishing is a kind of departure or separation or tearing of the very parts that prior to perishing were joined and held together. This is the kind of reasoning that led Socrates not to seek a defence attorney⁶⁶ when he faced a capital charge. Nor did he throw himself on the mercy of the court, but instead displayed outright contempt, not from arrogance, but from greatness of soul. And on the last day of his life he said a good deal about this matter, and when a few days earlier he could so easily have escaped from prison, he chose not to; and then, even as he held the death-bearing goblet in his hand, he said that in his view he wasn't being put to death but ascending to heaven.

Socrates believed and taught that there are two paths, two courses for souls as they leave the body.⁶⁷ A journey downward, isolated from the council of the gods, for those who contaminated themselves with human vices, and submitted so completely to desires that they became blinded by them and committed private crimes and vices or did unforgivable violence to the state. Those who kept whole and innocent, who were minimally affected by their bodies, who had always withdrawn from them and despite their human form imitated the life of gods: for them there was an easy return to the place from which they had set out.

And so he recalls how swans – sacred to Apollo with good reason, having learned divination from him – make use of that very skill to foresee the good in death and die singing and rejoicing. All good and learned men, he says, should act the same way. No one could doubt this matter, unless the same thing happened to us while thinking carefully about the soul as has often happened to those who stare intently into a solar eclipse, namely that they lose their sense of sight

altogether. The mind's eye sometimes grows weak in gazing at itself, which leads us to lessen the intensity of contemplation. And so our argument is tossed like a raft on the open sea, as we grow doubtful, circumspect, hesitant, fearful of many calamities.

But this is ancient history, and Greek at that. Cato departed from life, relieved to have found a means of dying.⁶⁸ For the god who rules within us forbids us to leave this world in the absence of his command. But when the god gives just cause – as once for Socrates, recently for Cato, often for many – not even then, by God, will the wise man rush joyously from this world of shadows into the light, nor will he break the bonds of his prison, since the law forbids. Instead, he will take his leave, summoned and released by the god, as if by a magistrate or other legitimate authority. In the words of Socrates,⁶⁹ the whole life of a philosopher is practice for death.

For what else are we doing when we call the soul away from pleasure, that is to say, from the body; or from family property, which is the aid and attendant of the body; or from public affairs and every occupation? What – except calling it to itself, urging it to be with itself and drawing it away entirely from the body? To separate the soul from the body is the same thing as learning how to die. Let us practise this separation, let us unbind ourselves from our bodies and grow accustomed to dying. In this way, although we remain on earth, our life will be as if in heaven, and when we are finally carried off, having been released from bondage, our soul's journey will not be delayed. For those who have always been shackled to their bodies, even when freed move very slowly, like men who have spent years in fetters and chains. And when we reach the heavens, then, finally, will we live. For the present life is truly death, which I could go on to lament if you'd like.

No, you've done that enough in your *Consolation*. When I read it, I want nothing more than to leave behind this present condition – all the more so now, as I listen to your remarks.

The time will come, and surely soon, whether you are reluctant or in a hurry. Our lifespan is fleeting. So far is death from being an evil, as you used to think, that I worry that nothing else is more assuredly not an evil, nothing else more obviously a good thing – especially if we're going to be gods or at least be among them.

Why does it matter?

There are many who will disapprove of what I say, but for my part I will never release you from this conversation if for any reason you still consider death an evil.

How can I, when I understand what you've been saying?

How, you want to know? Armies are gathering to take the other side – not just the Epicureans, whom, I have to confess, I don't really despise, though somehow every other learned man looks down on them. But even my dear friend Dicaearchus has argued against immortality. He wrote three books called the *Lesbian Dialogues* (because they take place at Mytilene⁷⁰), in which he sets out to prove that souls are mortal. And the Stoics in their generosity would make us out to be like crows: they say our souls last a long time, but not forever. I don't imagine you'd like to hear why death still isn't to be considered an evil, even if that is the case.

It's up to you. But no one is going to dissuade me from immortality!

I like your spirit, but let's not get too confident. Often enough we're persuaded at the end of a careful argument, then waver and change our minds, even on relatively straightforward matters. So let's prepare ourselves in case this happens.

And I'll certainly look out to make sure it doesn't.

So why not dismiss our allies the Stoics – or at least the ones who say the soul lives on after leaving the body, only not forever? The very ones who admit the hardest part of the argument, namely that the soul can live without a body, although they won't admit that after living a long time it doesn't die.

Your objection is a good one. It really is just as you say. Are we then to trust Panaetius in his dissent from Plato? The man he everywhere calls divine, supremely wise, most holy, the very Homer of philosophers? It's only Plato's argument for the immortality of souls he won't accept. For he believes – which nobody denies – that whatever is born perishes, and furthermore, that souls are born, as indicated by the physical as well as mental resemblance of children to their parents. He presents another line of argument, namely that nothing feels pain unless it is susceptible to illness, and anything susceptible to illness will eventually die. Souls feel pain, ergo they also

perish.

But this argument, too, can be refuted. For it ignores the fact that in discussing the immortality of souls we are really speaking of the mind, which isn't susceptible to disturbance, and not of those parts that are afflicted with illnesses, like anger and lust, parts which, according to Plato (who is the target of the criticism), are distinct from mind. Family resemblance is more apparent in the case of animals, whose souls lack reason. Among men the similarity is chiefly a matter of bodily resemblance; and if it does apply to souls it makes a big difference what kind of body the soul occupies. For many impulses that arise from the body improve the mind, and many make it dull. Indeed, Aristotle says that all great talents are also foul-tempered – which is why I don't mind being a little on the slow side! He gives many examples, and as if it were an established fact, an explanation as to how it comes about. But if things that originate in the body really have such an effect on the disposition of the mind, it is the bodily aspect that creates the resemblance. The resemblance doesn't require that souls be born.⁷¹ I pass over the dissimilarities.

I wish that Panaetius could be here (he lived with Africanus) – I would ask him: which of his relatives did the great-nephew of Africanus resemble? His physical appearance was that of his father, but his lifestyle resembled that of each and every good-for-nothing – to such an extent that he was easily the worst of all! Publius Crassus⁷² was a wise and eloquent man of the highest rank: whom did his grandson resemble? What about the sons and grandsons of many other distinguished men, whom there's no point in listing by name. But what are we doing? Have we forgotten about the proposal we made, once we had spoken enough about eternity, that even if souls die, there's nothing bad in death?

Well, I remembered, but I let you wander from the stated theme, since you were speaking about eternity.

I can see you're looking upward and are ready to head for the sky! I hope that's how it turns out for us. But let's suppose, as others have it, that souls don't survive after death. If so, I see how we're deprived of hope for a better kind of life – but what kind of evil does this point of view entail? Say the soul dies just like the body. Does that mean the body suffers pain or has any kind of feeling after death? Not that anyone makes such a claim, although Epicurus falsely ascribes it to Democritus,⁷³ despite the denial of Democritus' followers. But then no

feeling remains in the soul either. For the soul is nowhere. So where's the suffering to be found, since there's nothing besides soul and body? Or is it that the departure of the soul from the body can't take place without pain? Even if I believed that, the suffering involved is trivial. But I think it's false, and that the separation involves no sensation, generally speaking, and is sometimes even pleasant. Either way it's insignificant, for the separation takes but a moment.

'So painful, so excruciating this departure from all that is good about life.' Watch out, or you might have to say 'from all that is bad'. But what's the point in mourning human life? I could do so, truthfully and with justice. But given my aim of getting us to understand that we will not be miserable after death, what's the use in making life more wretched by bemoaning it? Besides, I've done so already in the book in which I consoled myself as much as I could. If we want to know the truth, death drags us away from bad things, not good. This is just the point that the Cyrenaic philosopher Hegesias lectured on – so thoroughly that King Ptolemy⁷⁴ prohibited him from speaking any more in schools, since many who listened to him ended up taking their own lives!

There's even an epigram of Callimachus about Theombrotus of Ambracia, in which he says that although nothing bad had happened to him, he threw himself from a wall into the sea because he read a certain book by Plato.⁷⁵ As for Hegesias, whom I just mentioned, he wrote a book called *Self-Starvers*, in which a man who is summoned back to life by his friends when he is starving himself to death refutes them by enumerating all the disadvantages of human existence. I could do the same thing, although to a lesser degree, since he thinks that no one's life is advantageous from any point of view. Leaving aside other people: is it advantageous to us? If we had died before suffering the loss of all private and public consolation and distinction, death would have been taking us from bad things, not good.⁷⁶

Let's say a person experiences nothing bad, suffers no great misfortune: Metellus, for example, with his four well-respected sons, or Priam⁷⁷ who had fifty sons, seventeen of them legitimate. Fortune had the same power over both men, but used it in opposite ways. Many sons, daughters, grandsons and granddaughters placed Metellus on his funeral pyre. But the hand of an enemy slew Priam, who had lost so many offspring, as he took refuge at the altar. If he had died while his sons were living and his kingdom safe,

His barbarian wealth intact,
His royal halls embossed and panelled,

would he have missed out on good or evil? At the time, it would have seemed that he was losing something good. But in fact his death would have proved a benefit to him, and there wouldn't have been a singing of the dirge,

I saw everything go up in flames,
Priam violently deprived of life,
The altar of Jove polluted with his blood.⁷⁸

As if a violent death was not then the best possible outcome. And if Priam had died earlier, he could have avoided such suffering altogether. As it turned out, what he lost was the sensation of loss.

As for my friend Pompey,⁷⁹ although he was gravely ill at Naples, he recovered. The Neapolitans responded by wearing wreaths; of course the residents of Puteoli did too. Folks came from the neighbouring towns to offer congratulations. Frankly, it was a silly business, typically Greek,⁸⁰ but a mark of good fortune nonetheless. If he had died on that occasion, would he have departed from good things or from bad? Surely from terrible things. For he wouldn't have waged war with his father-in-law, he wouldn't have taken up arms unprepared, he wouldn't have abandoned his home, fled from Italy, and, after losing an army, fallen naked onto the sword and hands of his slaves. His children wouldn't have worn themselves out with weeping, his property wouldn't belong to his conquerors. Had he passed away on that occasion, he would have died in the fullness of fortune; but thanks to the extension of his life, how many huge and unbelievable calamities he had to endure! These are the sorts of thing death allows us to escape – because if they haven't yet happened, they still can. But people don't think they'll encounter such misfortune. Everybody expects to have the good luck of Metellus, as if more of us are lucky than unlucky or any certainty exists in human affairs! As if it's wiser to hope than to fear!

But let's concede this point, that death deprives men of much that is good. Does this then mean that the dead lack the benefits of life, and that such lack is the reason for their unhappiness? That would seem to be the obvious conclusion. But is it even possible for someone who doesn't exist to lack anything? The very term 'lack' is a sad one, because it implies the following: he had, he doesn't have; he desires, seeks, needs. These, I suppose, are the disadvantages associated with lacking: hateful blindness, if a person lacks eyes; childlessness, if he lacks offspring. This makes a difference to the living, but none of the dead lacks the advantages of life, or life itself for that matter. I speak

of the dead, who are non-existent. We, who exist, wouldn't say we lack horns or wings, would we? Has anyone said such a thing? Of course not. Why? Because, when you don't have something for which you have no use or aren't by nature suited, you don't lack it, even if you perceive that you don't have it.

This point must be emphasized repeatedly, once we've first confirmed that if souls are mortal, then without doubt death is so final that not the slightest bit of sensation remains. With this established definitively, we must then decide what's meant by the word 'lack', so that there's no misunderstanding. The meaning of 'lack' is as follows: to be without something you would like to have; for 'lack' implies desire, except when it's used in a different sense, as in 'to lack a fever'. In that case you don't have something and you perceive you don't have it, but you gladly accept the situation. But this isn't the way we speak of 'lack' in connection with death, since there's no sense that what we lack⁸¹ is hurtful. Rather, we use the word in its first meaning, implying we are lacking something good, which is bad. But not even a living person 'lacks' a good if the good is something he feels no loss of. With regard to a living person we understand the meaning of a phrase such as 'he lacks his kingdom' – although it doesn't apply to you, it could apply to Tarquin after he was dethroned. But in the case of a dead person, the concept is incomprehensible. 'Lacking' belongs to a person with feelings. A dead person has no feelings. So a dead person does not lack.

But why philosophize on this theme when there's clearly no need to do so? Think how often our generals, and even entire armies, have rushed towards certain death. Lucius Brutus wouldn't have died while fighting off the tyrant⁸² he had driven out if he had feared death. The elder Decius wouldn't have faced the enemy's weapons while fighting the Latins, the younger while battling the Etruscans, or the grandson⁸³ while fighting Pyrrhus. Spain wouldn't have watched two Scipios die for the ancestral homeland in a single battle, nor would Cannae have seen Paullus and Geminus fall.⁸⁴ Marcellus wouldn't have died at Venusia, or Albinus at Litania, or Gracchus⁸⁵ among the Lucani, if they had feared death. Do you seriously think any of them is unhappy today? In fact, they weren't even unhappy the second after they breathed their last, for it isn't possible to feel bad when feeling is gone.

'But it's terrible to be without feeling!' It would be, if that's what we meant by 'lack'. But since it's obvious that someone who doesn't exist doesn't have anything, then how can someone who neither feels nor

lacks feel any terrible lack? Although I belabour the point, it's because this is the source of all fear and anxiety concerning death. For once we recognize that after the soul and body die, and all animating power is utterly destroyed, the creature who had existed becomes nothing (which is a fact clearer than light), then it's also easy to see that there is no difference between a centaur, which never existed, and King Agamemnon, and that Marcus Camillus⁸⁶ is no more concerned with our present civil war than I was with the capture of Rome during his lifetime. So why then would Camillus have felt sad if he knew what was going to happen to his country 350 years in the future, or why would I feel pain at the idea that some nation might overpower our city 10,000 years from now? Because affection for our country is so great that we measure it not by the standard of our own sensory experience but by the standard of our country's well-being.

As a consequence, neither the possibility of death – due to the uncertainty of events – nor even its proximity – due to the shortness of life – will deter the wise man from considering at every moment the well-being of the Republic and of his people. For he will recognize that posterity, of which he will have no sensation, is nonetheless his concern. This is why it's permissible for a soul, though mortal, to place a premium on eternity – not out of lust for glory, which can't be felt anyway, but from a longing for virtue, of which glory is an inevitable consequence, whether you seek it or not.

Indeed, nature arranges that just as birth is the beginning of everything for us, so death is the end, and just as nothing mattered to us before we were born, nothing will matter after we die. What harm can there be in death, when it isn't relevant to the living or the dead?

It won't affect the former, and the latter don't exist. Some try to make light of death by saying that it's just like sleep – as if anyone would trade ninety years of life for sixty, on the understanding that he'd sleep away the rest of time. Our loved ones wouldn't want this for us, nor would we. To take an example from mythology, there's Endymion, who once upon a time dozed off on Mount Latmos in Caria and, for all I know, hasn't yet awakened.⁸⁷ Do you think he cares whether the labouring moon, who made him swoon, kisses him while he sleeps?

Why would he care, when he's not aware? You say sleep is the image of death, and you wrap yourself in it every night. And yet you wonder whether there is any sensation in death, when you know that there's no sensation in this likeness of death.

Away with these old wives' tales, with this idea that it's terrible to

die before one's time! What time? The time of nature? It made us a loan without a due date. Why complain if it seeks repayment at a time of its choosing? After all, you accepted the loan on these terms! The same people think the death of a child is to be borne calmly; if it's a baby in nappies, we're not even supposed to complain. And yet nature is brutal in recalling its gift from a child. 'It hasn't yet tasted the sweetness of life, he had hope for great things, which he had just begun to enjoy.' But of every other good we consider it better to have some share than none at all. Why is it different with life? Although Callimachus wasn't wrong to say that we cry harder for Priam than Troilus⁸⁸ – still, people praise the luck of those who die in old age.

And why is that? Surely no one's life is more pleasant just because it's longer. Nothing is dearer to a man than good sense, which old age supplies, although it takes away almost everything else. What constitutes a long lifespan, anyway, or more generally, what is 'long' in human terms? Isn't it true that old age

Trails first boys then adolescents on their way
And catches up with them all unawares.⁸⁹

But because we have nothing beyond this lifespan, we call it long. We call things long on a relative or proportional basis. Aristotle reports that along the river Hypanis, which flows into Pontus from Europe, tiny creatures are born that live but a single day.⁹⁰ If they die at the eighth hour they're of an advanced age, if at sunset, they're decrepit – even more so on the solstice. Measure the longest human lifespan against eternity: you'll find that we live about as briefly as those little creatures do.

So let's set aside this foolishness (for what more trifling name can I give to such triviality?). Let's place the whole capacity for living well in the soul's greatness and strength, in scorn and contempt for all human affairs, in the fullness of virtue. Instead, we turn ourselves into women with our sensitive outlook, believing that we've been deprived of so many benefits, left beguiled and forsaken, if death arrives before we've lived the allotment promised by the Chaldaean soothsayers.⁹¹

But if anticipation and longing hold our minds in suspense, and we endure anguish and torture, good gods! – our journey is supposed to be a pleasant one, with no anxiety, no concern for the future persisting after it's done. How I rejoice in Theramenes!⁹² How elevated his soul! We may weep when we read of his hero's death, but in no way was it miserable. Thrown into prison at the order of the Thirty Tyrants, he gladly drank the poison. The last drop, which he tossed

from the cup, made a sound:⁹³ upon hearing it, he declared, laughing, ‘I drink a toast to the noble Critias’ – the very man who had behaved so cruelly towards him. For you see the Greeks at their drinking parties are in the habit of naming the person to whom they’ll pass the cup. With his dying breath this excellent man made a joke, even as his vital organs absorbed certain death. He also accurately predicted the death of the man he toasted, for it followed shortly thereafter.⁹⁴

Could we praise the equanimity of the greatest soul of all if we considered death an evil? Just a few years later Socrates entered the same cell and drank the same cup, suffering criminal abuse from a jury⁹⁵ just as Theramenes had from the tyrants. Here’s what Plato has him say⁹⁶ in the presence of the jury after he’d been sentenced to death:

Gentlemen, I have great hope of a good outcome in being released to death. For one of two things must be true: either death removes sensation entirely, or it transfers it from here to some other place. If sensation ends and death is just like sleep – the kind that brings profound rest without dreams – good god, what a blessing it is to die! How many days are preferable to such a night? If eternity is to be spent like that, who is luckier than I?

But if the other view is true, that death is a migration into the land of the deceased, why this is an even better outcome! When you’ve escaped from people who like to think of themselves as judges, and instead you approach Minos, Rhadamanthus, Aeacus and Triptolemus,⁹⁷ who are called judges with good reason, and join still others who lived their lives in accordance with justice and integrity: does a journey of this sort seem in any way mediocre? What would you pay to talk with the likes of Orpheus, Musaeus, Homer and Hesiod?⁹⁸ If it were possible, I’d be happy to die many times for the chance to observe what I’ve been describing. What a delight it would be to join Palamedes, Ajax⁹⁹ and others who were cheated by an unjust judgement! I could test the wisdom of the greatest king, who led the famous expedition to Troy, and challenge Ulysses and Sisyphus without risking capital punishment for asking questions as I used to here.¹⁰⁰ Not even you jurors who voted to acquit me would fear death.

For nothing bad happens to a good person, living or dead, nor are his affairs ever neglected by the immortal gods, nor has any of this happened to me by chance. I have no reason to be angry with those who accused or condemned me, except the fact that they believe they are doing me harm.

That’s the sort of thing he said, but nothing was better than his final statement:

Now it's time to leave this place, me to die, you to live. Which of us has the better of it, the immortal gods know, but I believe no human being knows.

I'd much rather have his soul than the combined fortunes of the men who passed judgement on him. Although he says no one but the gods knows which is the better outcome, in fact he does know, for he said as much earlier. Still, he remains true to the end to his principle of affirming nothing. Let us, however, maintain our conviction that nothing that is given by nature to all is bad. Let us recognize that if death is an evil, then evil is eternal. For death is the end of the misery of life, but if death itself is miserable, then there can be no end.

But why limit ourselves to men renowned for virtue and wisdom, like Socrates and Theramenes? A certain Spartan, whose name hasn't even been passed down, despised death so greatly that when he was being led to execution after his condemnation by the ephors, he maintained a relaxed and joyous expression. To an enemy's challenge – 'Is this how you mock the laws of Lycurgus?' – he answered, 'On the contrary, I give great thanks to him, for he decreed a punishment that I can pay without taking out a loan or juggling debts.'¹⁰¹ O worthy man of Sparta! His spirit was so great that it seems he must have been an innocent man condemned to die. There have been many such in our own country.

But why name just the generals and leading men, when Cato writes¹⁰² that legions have often gone readily to places from which they had no expectation of return? The Spartans who died at Thermopylae¹⁰³ were in a similar state of mind. Simonides wrote of them:

Stranger, tell at Sparta how you saw us lying here,
Obedient to the sacred laws of our country.

What did their great general Leonidas say? 'Set forth bravely, Spartans, today perhaps we will dine among the dead.' They truly were a brave people, as long as the laws of Lycurgus were respected. When a Persian enemy once boasted at a colloquy, 'The vast number of our arrows and spears will keep you from seeing the sun,' one of the Spartans responded, 'Then we'll fight in the shade.'

My stories so far are all about men. What of the Spartan woman who, after learning that the son she sent to battle had died, declared, 'I bore him for this reason: to be the kind of person who would not hesitate to die for his country.'¹⁰⁴ So be it: the Spartans were tough and brave. The discipline of the state has a great effect. But don't we

also marvel at the distinguished philosopher, Theodorus of Cyrenae? When King Lysimachus threatened to crucify him, he said, ‘Save your threats for the nobles of your court. Theodorus¹⁰⁵ couldn’t care less whether his body decays under the earth or up in the air.’

His words remind me that I need to say something about burial and inhumation – no difficult matter if we accept our earlier statements about the lack of sensation. Socrates’ view of the practice is evident in the book in which he dies, which I have already cited at length.

For when he had finished speaking about the immortality of the soul, and the time for dying approached, Crito asked him how he wanted to be buried. ‘My friends,’ he answered, ‘I’ve wasted a lot of effort, for I haven’t persuaded Crito here that I am flying from this place and that nothing of me will stay behind. Still, if you manage to follow me or find me somewhere, Crito, then bury me as you judge best. But take my word for it, none of you will join me when I’ve departed.’¹⁰⁶ He did the right thing in granting permission to his friend and at the same time showing that the whole business didn’t concern him in the least.

Diogenes¹⁰⁷ was less accommodating, and though he had the same opinion, he expressed it more bluntly, being a Cynic. He ordered that his corpse just be tossed out, unburied. His friends asked: ‘Exposed to the birds and wild beasts?’ ‘Not at all, just put a club alongside me so I can drive them off.’ ‘How can you do that? You’ll have no sensation.’ ‘And if I have no sensation, what harm will it do me to be mangled by beasts?’ Especially admirable are the words of Anaxagoras.¹⁰⁸ When he was dying at Lampsacus, he told friends who asked if he wanted to be taken to Clazomenae in the event something happened to him: ‘That won’t be necessary; the trip to hell is just as long no matter where you start from.’ On this whole issue of burial, one point is worth remembering: it affects the body and only the body, whether the soul dies or continues to live. It’s obvious that no sensation remains in the body once the soul has died or departed.

But everything is full of error! Achilles drags Hector tied to his chariot.¹⁰⁹ Apparently he thinks Hector is being torn apart – and feeling it! This is how he takes vengeance on him – or so he imagines. And how Hector’s wife laments, as if mourning the most bitter fate:

I saw what it grieved me greatly to see,
Hector dragged by a four-horse chariot.

What Hector? And for how long will he still be Hector? Better the words of Accius¹¹⁰ – and for once a wise Achilles: ‘It was a corpse I

returned to Priam; Hector I destroyed’ – in other words, you dragged not Hector, but the body that once was Hector. But look, another one rises from the earth – and keeps his mother from sleeping:

Mother, I call upon you, as you relieve your cares through sleep.

Have you no pity on me? Rise and bury your son!

When a song of this sort is sung to grave and tearful melodies that are designed to move the whole theatre to sadness, it’s difficult not to think of the unburied as miserable. ‘Before beasts and birds of prey – ’ he’s afraid he won’t be able to use his limbs once they’ve been torn apart. Evidently he doesn’t worry what will happen once they’ve been burned to a crisp!

Please don’t leave my half-eaten remains, bones stripped bare,
Scattered blood-smeared across the earth.¹¹¹

I don’t understand what he’s afraid of, seeing how he intones such fine septenarii¹¹² to the sound of the flute! We must hold fast to our view that there’s no cause for concern after death, even though many people punish their dead enemies. Ennius’ Thyestes issues a curse in truly brilliant poetry, praying at first that Atreus die by shipwreck. That’s bad enough, since such a death cannot be a pleasant experience. What follows, though, is absurd:

Impaled on the summit of a rocky crag, disembowelled, dangling by his flank,
Spattering the rocks with gore, with blood all black and clotted.

Although he thinks he’s wishing him excruciating pain, the one who’s ‘dangling by his flank’ will have no more sensation than the rocks themselves. An unpleasant experience is nothing if there’s no power of sensation. Still he continues on his pointless way:

Let him have no tomb to receive him, no harbour
where his body
Can rest from its travails, when human life is done.¹¹³

Surely you see what a mistake he makes: he thinks there’s safe haven for a corpse and that the dead take a rest in the tomb! Pelops¹¹⁴ has a lot to answer for, not educating his son, not teaching him what’s worth worrying about and for how long.

But why do I bother with the opinions of individuals when the diverse errors of entire nations are plain to see? The Egyptians embalm their dead and keep them safe and sound at home. The Persians pack dead bodies in wax so they’ll stay preserved as long as possible. The custom among the Magi¹¹⁵ is not to bury their dead until

they've been ripped apart by animals. In Hyrcania¹¹⁶ the common people feed public dogs, the aristocrats private ones. Granted, it's a noble species of dog, but each person according to his means secures the creatures who will tear him apart – and they think it's the best kind of burial!

Chrysippus¹¹⁷ has collected many other customs of this sort, careful as he is in all of his scholarship. But some are so disgusting that I shudder to mention them. There's no need to concern ourselves with our own burial, but we should not neglect those near and dear to us, as long as we survivors remember that the bodies of the dead feel nothing. The living should provide whatever custom and public opinion demand, as long as they understand that none of it matters to the dead.

Death is especially likely to be met with equanimity when the person departing from life can find consolation in his own laudable actions. No life is too short if virtue is complete. Many times I've felt the time was right for me to die – if only I could have done so! For there was nothing left to seek, the duties of life were all fulfilled, all that remained were struggles with fortune. If reason is unable to make us disregard death, at the least the kind of life we've led can help us see that we've lived long and more than enough. Although sensation will be gone, the dead will not lack the benefit of their proper praise and glory, even though they don't perceive. Although glory is not to be sought for its own sake, it follows virtue like a shadow.

If there's popular recognition of good people, that's a good thing: but it's not what makes the good person happy. However this observation is taken, I can't honestly say that Lycurgus and Solon lack glory for their laws and public regulations, or that Themistocles and Epaminondas¹¹⁸ go without praise for martial valour. Neptune will submerge the isle of Salamis sooner than the memory of the victory won there, and Leuctra will vanish out of Boeotia before the glory of the battle of Leuctra fades. Later still will fame abandon Curius, Fabricius, Calatinus, the two Scipios and two Africani, Maximus, Marcellus, Paullus, Cato, Laelius, and countless others.¹¹⁹ Anyone who achieves a status similar to theirs, measured not by popular renown but by the true praise of honourable men, when the time comes will with steady soul approach death, which as we know brings the greatest good, or at least no evil. Even when things are going well such a person will be willing to die, for the joy of gathering life's benefits does not match the pain of their departure.

There's a story told about a certain Spartan that makes the same

point. When an elderly Rhodian named Diagoras, himself a renowned Olympic victor, saw his two sons win Olympic victories on the same day, the Spartan approached and congratulated him, saying, ‘Die, Diagoras, for you’re not going to ascend into heaven.’¹²⁰ The Greeks make much of this, maybe too much, or at least used to, and the one who spoke to Diagoras, judging it a very big deal for three Olympic champions to come from one family, thought that extending life any further was pointless and would just make him the plaything of fortune.

I believe that with just a few words I gave you a sufficient response, since you already conceded that the dead suffer no evil. But I extended the discussion because in longing and in grief this recognition is the greatest consolation. We should endure our own grief and grief on our behalf with moderation, so as not to seem in love with ourselves. The belief that those we’ve lost are suffering any of the evils that are commonly feared tortures us with unbearable pain. My goal has been to destroy that belief root and branch, which is why I have gone on perhaps too long.

You? Go on too long? Not for me! For the first part of your talk made me eager to die, the second made me sometimes not unwilling to die, at other points at least not troubled by the idea. But the speech as a whole had the effect on me that I definitely do not regard death as something bad.

So then we don’t need an epilogue of the sort they teach in rhetoric school? Can we just leave that art to the side?

Well you shouldn’t set it aside, since it’s an art you’ve honoured – in fact, it has brought honour to you! But what kind of epilogue do you mean? I’m eager to hear it, whatever it is.

In the schools they like to present the judgements of the immortal gods concerning death. They don’t make them up themselves, but rely on Herodotus and many others. First they commend Cleobis and Biton, sons of an Argive priestess. The story is well-known: she needed to be taken to a solemn sacrifice at a shrine some distance from her town. Because the ox-team wasn’t available, the sons I just named got undressed, rubbed their bodies with oil and took up the wagon’s yoke. In this manner the priestess was transported to the sacred shrine. And it’s said that when her sons had finished pulling the ox-cart, she prayed to the goddess to give them a reward for their devotion, the

greatest a god can give to a mortal. After dining with their mother, the young men went to sleep. In the morning they were found dead.¹²¹

Trophonius and Agamedes are said to have made a similar request. When they had built the temple of Apollo at Delphi, they prayed to the god, seeking no small compensation for their labour and materials – nothing specific, just whatever would be best for a mortal. Apollo indicated that he would reward them in three days' time. At daybreak on the third day, they were discovered dead. The god, it's said, had given his judgement – the very god to whom the other gods have granted priority in divination.¹²² The same tale is even reported about Silenus. It's written that when he had been captured by Midas,¹²³ he gave the king a gift in return for his release: he taught him that not being born is the best thing for a human being, and the second best is to die as soon as possible.

Euripides expresses the same idea in his *Cresphontes*:

We thought it fitting to crowd the house with mourning;
Whenever someone came into the light
We'd count off the ills of human life.
But when anyone ended his heavy labours by dying,
Friends would lead the corpse to burial with joyous celebration.

Something similar is found in the *Consolation* of Crantor.¹²⁴ He says that a certain Elysius from Terinaeum, deeply saddened by the death of his son, asked the necromancers the reason for such a calamity. He was given tablets with the following verses:

Mortal men roam through life with ignorant minds.
Euthynous has death as his share through the decision of fate.
This was the better outcome for him – and for you.¹²⁵

Based on stories like these, they say that the gods have communicated their judgement in actions. Indeed, Alcidas,¹²⁶ a very famous ancient rhetorician, composed a eulogy of death, which consists of an enumeration of human woes. It omitted the more subtle arguments assembled by philosophers, but didn't lack for richness of style. The rhetoricians consider prominent deaths for the sake of one's country not just subject matter for boastful display, but events that are genuinely blessed. They tell the story of Erechtheus,¹²⁷ whose daughters eagerly sought death in exchange for the lives of their fellow citizens. They call to mind Codrus,¹²⁸ who threw himself into the midst of the enemy dressed in the clothes of a slave so as not to be recognized by his kingly attire. For an oracle had been given, saying that if the king was killed, Athens would triumph. They don't forget Menoeceus,¹²⁹ who also gave his blood for his ancestral homeland on

the basis of an oracle. Iphigenia ordered her own sacrifice, so that ‘by dying she might call forth the death of the enemy’.¹³⁰

Then they come to more recent examples. They tell of Harmodius and Aristogiton, and keep alive the memory of Spartan Leonidas¹³¹ and Epaminondas of Thebes. They’re not familiar with our people; and besides it would be an enormous task to list them by name, so many we see who have chosen a glorious death.

Since these things are so, great eloquence is called for, and speeches to the populace as if from on high. Let men begin to desire death – or at least stop fearing it. If our final day brings not destruction but relocation, what could be preferable? And if it does carry off and destroy everything, what better than to doze off in the midst of life’s labours and close our eyes in eternal sleep? If that’s how it is, then Ennius’ words are better than Solon’s. For our poet said:

Let no one honour me with tears,
Or celebrate my funeral with loud lament,¹³²

while the other sage wrote:

May my dying not be without tears. I bequeath to my friends
Sorrow. Let them celebrate my funeral with a groan.¹³³

For our own part, if it comes about that a god seems to be signalling our departure from life, let us obey gladly and with thanks, and consider ourselves released from prison and freed from chains. Either we return to our true and eternal home, or we lack all sensation and cause for worry. And even if we receive no warning, let us still believe with heart and soul that a day which makes others tremble is a fortunate one for us; and let us count nothing as evil that has been ordained either by the immortal gods or by nature, the parent of all.

For we weren’t conceived and born rashly and without reason, but surely there was some power that made plans for the human race. It didn’t give birth to us and sustain us just so that when we had endured to the end all kinds of struggles we would fall into the endless evil of death. Let us suppose instead that a port or refuge has been prepared for us. If only we could approach it with sails unfurled! But if we are tossed by contrary winds, still it only means that we’re delayed a little. Can something that everyone must undergo be a cause of misery to one?

There’s your epilogue: please don’t think that I’ve overlooked anything.

I definitely won’t! Your epilogue has made me even more steadfast.

Very well then. But now let's give a little thought to our health! Tomorrow and however many days we're here in Tusculum, let's discuss topics of this sort, especially those that help to relieve anxiety, fear and desire. For this is the richest yield of any philosophy.

The Divinity of the Universe

On the Nature of the Gods 2.18–44

Cicero was at work on his treatise On the Nature of the Gods at roughly the same time as he composed Tusculan Disputations, namely summer and autumn of 45 BCE. He seems to have regarded On the Nature of the Gods as an opportunity to expand upon some of the issues treated in Tusculans. Here he returns to his more common pattern of having other Romans appear as spokesmen for different philosophical points of view, with Velleius explaining the Epicurean position and Balbus presenting the Stoic, with Cotta¹ the Academic criticizing both. For all that he seems to try to give a fair presentation of conflicting views, Cicero ends the entire treatise by having Cotta say that his attacks are only meant to show the difficulty of making positive arguments about the gods, and declaring, in his own person as author, that he believes Balbus to have the better case.

*The following selection, from the speech of Balbus, typifies the enthusiasm with which he communicates the Stoic position on the existence and nature of the gods. This section of On the Nature of the Gods is an important source for the highly influential, but much misunderstood, Stoic physical system. For the Stoics, nothing exists but the material universe, which is a continuous, living whole. Far from turning them into atheists, their understanding of the universe allows them to redefine divinity, as this section of Balbus' speech makes clear. Throughout, he plays on the Latin word *natura*, which means something like 'essence', but also is used to describe each of the classical four elements – earth, air, water and fire. For Balbus, the essence of divinity is the flickering, brilliant, life-giving, sustaining, yet ultimately all-consuming elemental fire. Although Cicero himself hesitated to commit to Stoic dogma, many of his philosophical writings show a similar understanding of the workings of the physical universe and share the Stoic reluctance to discuss reality, meaning, morality, and so on, in anything other than strictly physical terms. Thus we may well understand Balbus' speech as providing the necessary physical foundation for some of the ideas about the continuum of life and the nature of human psychology expounded in Tusculan Disputations.*

From the intelligence of human beings we ought to infer the existence

of mind in the universe, one that is sharper than ours, even divine. From what other source did mankind steal its wits, as Xenophon's Socrates puts it?² If anyone asks where we got the moisture and heat that are spread throughout the body, the dense earthiness of our internal organs, or the breath that animates us, the answer is obvious: some of this we took from earth, some from water, some from fire, the rest from the lower atmosphere, which we call air.³ But what about the force that binds all of these things, by which I mean reason, or if you prefer other terms, mind, counsel, thought, foresight: where did we find it? from what source did we steal it? If the physical universe contains everything else, will it not contain this one thing, which is of the greatest value? Surely there is nothing better, greater, more beautiful than the universe: we can't even conceive of anything better. And if nothing is better than reason and wisdom, then they must exist in the universe, which we acknowledge as best of all.

Consider the physical world – how it feels, breathes and holds together. Its extraordinary and innate interconnectedness will compel anyone to agree with what I am saying. How could it be that the earth blooms in one season, then shivers in the next, that so many changes take place at the approach or retreat of the sun in the summer and winter solstice? How is it that the tides of the open sea and the narrow straits move to the waxing and waning of the moon, while the unequal orbits of the stars stay constant with each full turning of the heavens? This harmony of all parts of the universe is impossible unless they are held together by a single, divine, all-pervading spirit.

Explaining this theory in lush and flowing language, as I intend to do, makes it easier to dispel the slander of the Academics.⁴ For when Stoic physics is kept within narrow bounds, as it is with Zeno,⁵ it becomes more susceptible to rejection. It's all but impossible to pollute a flowing stream, easy enough to poison a cistern. So, too, a rush of eloquence washes away objections, while a thin trickle of reasoning has a hard time protecting itself. Zeno used to compress what I've been saying as follows:

That which employs reason is better than that which does not.
Nothing is better than the universe, thus the universe employs reason.

In like manner it can be established that the universe is wise, happy and eternal: for these qualities are all better than their absence, and nothing is better than the universe. From this it will follow that the universe is god. As Zeno puts it:

It isn't possible for an entity that lacks the capacity for sensing to have some part that is sentient. Parts of the universe are sentient. So the universe cannot be lacking in sentience.

He continues, and presses even more closely:

Nothing without life and reason can generate from itself something that lives and has reason. The universe generates beings that live and have reason. So the universe is alive and rational.⁶

As often, he summarizes his argument with a simile:

If flutes playing tuneful songs grew on an olive tree, would you be reluctant to infer that the olive tree possessed some version of the flute-player's knowledge? Likewise, if plane-trees bore lyres that could ring out rhythms, you'd surely suppose that plane-trees know their music. Why then do you continue to believe that the universe is neither living nor wise, when it generates from itself animate and wise offspring?

Now that I've started a line of discussion different from that which I initially proposed – for I had stated that this topic required no explanation, since it is obvious to everyone that gods exist – I'd like to strengthen the case with arguments drawn from physics, that is, the study of nature. For it just so happens that everything that takes nourishment and grows contains in itself the force of heat without which nurture and growth are impossible. Whatever is hot and fiery supplies its own motion; that which takes nourishment and grows relies on a definite, steady motion. As long as that motion persists, sensation and life persist, but when the fire grows cold and dies out, we too are extinguished.

Cleanthes⁷ explains the universal power of heat with the following arguments. He points out that every type of food, no matter how heavy, is thoroughly digested within a twenty-four-hour period; and even the remnants of food that nature ejects contain some warmth. Our veins and arteries flow constantly with a flickering pulse like that of fire; and hearts plucked from living creatures have been seen to palpitate, as if in imitation of the nimbleness of flame. Everything that lives, whether animal or product of the earth, lives thanks to the heat within it – from which we should understand that elemental heat contains a vital power that permeates the entire universe.

His point becomes clear once we describe in detail the fiery element that flows through everything. All parts of the universe (although I'll mention only the most important) depend on heat for sustenance. This is evident first in the case of earth. For we see how rubbing or striking

rocks elicits fire, how earth that is newly dug up is warm and steamy, how warm water is drawn from underground springs especially in the winter time, because the depths of the earth contain much heat, and in winter when the ground is denser it tightens its grip on the heat within.

It would take a long speech and many arguments to explain how all the seeds that the earth accepts and all the plants it generates and grasps by their roots spring up and grow through the tempering of heat. Water, too, contains an admixture of heat,⁸ as its fluid nature makes clear: it couldn't congeal into ice or pile up as snow and frost unless it could also liquefy and spread in different directions due to an admixture of heat. Moisture hardens when the north wind or some other source of cold is added, and it softens in turn when heat makes it grow warm and melt. Seas that are stirred up by winds also grow warm, allowing us to recognize that there is heat enclosed even in such enormous liquid masses. For the warmth of the sea isn't external or accidental in origin, but is thought to be churned up through agitation of the inmost parts – as happens to our bodies when they grow warm due to motion or exercise.

Even air, which is by nature the coldest element, can hardly be said to lack heat. On the contrary, the atmosphere has a great deal of heat mixed in, since it originates in the exhalation of the waters and is considered to be a kind of vapour given off by them. It exists thanks to the movement of the heat contained in the waters – as we can see for ourselves when water heated with fire gives off steam. All that's left is the final element of the universe, which is both entirely warm in and of itself and imparts vital, healing warmth to the other elements.

And so, because all parts of the universe are sustained by heat, we conclude that the universe itself owes its long duration to a similar or equivalent element, all the more so in that this warm and fiery something should be understood as pervading all of nature, providing the power and cause of procreation and generation, through which, of necessity, all animate beings and everything rooted in the earth are born and grow.

There exists, therefore, a natural force that holds together and protects the entire universe, a force lacking neither sensation nor reason. For it must be the case that any natural entity that is composite or conjoined, as opposed to isolated and homogeneous, has some governing principle or leading faculty in which impulse originates, for example, mind in the case of man, something like mind in animals – in trees and other plants this leading faculty is thought to

inhabit the roots. By 'leading faculty' I mean what the Greeks call *hegemonikon* – that which, in any given species, neither can nor should be surpassed. And so it must be the case that whatever constitutes the guiding principle of the whole of nature must be the best of all and most deserving of power and mastery over all of reality.

We see that sensation and reason are present in parts of the universe – for nothing exists that isn't part of the universe. They must exist – and in a very keen and intense state – in the same place where the ruling faculty of the universe is found. It follows of necessity that the universe is wise, that the natural entity that keeps all things interwoven excels in the perfection of reason, that the universe therefore is god and all its power is sustained by a natural essence that is divine.

What is more, the fiery heat of the universe is purer, more brilliant, more agile, and for these reasons better suited to stimulate our thoughts and feelings than this warmth of ours that preserves and invigorates familiar objects.⁹ When men and beasts are sustained and, in addition, set to moving and thinking by such, it would be absurd to state that the universe lacks thought and feeling, when it is sustained by a fire that is free, pure and undiminished, and thereby uniquely keen and nimble – a cosmic fire ignited by no outside force but moving on its own of its own volition. For what can be stronger than the universe, such as to compel the heat that sustains it?

Let's remember the teaching of Plato, that veritable god among philosophers. He says that of the two types of motion – self-generated and external – the spontaneous type is more godlike than the one generated by an outside impulse; moreover, that spontaneous motion is found only in souls, which he regards as the originators of motion. Therefore, because all motion starts from cosmic fire, this type of fire must move of its own accord and not from external impulse, and so it must be a type of soul – which means that the universe is animate.¹⁰

It will be possible to infer, as well, that the universe possesses intelligence, for it is surely superior to any one element. Just as every individual part of our body is inferior to ourselves, so the universe must be greater than any part of the universe. But if that's the case, then the universe must be wise, for if it weren't, then man, who is part of the universe, would, in that he has a share of reason, be greater than the whole universe.

Even if we decide to proceed from primal and unformed entities to ultimate and perfected ones, we necessarily arrive at the class of gods. For we notice first that plants are sustained by nature, although nature

grants them nothing more than survival through nourishment and growth. To animals, however, nature has given sensation and power of movement, and a certain impulse for approaching what is salutary, avoiding what is harmful. Nature amplified this impulse in man by adding reason whereby the impulses of the soul could be regulated, at times restrained, at times given freer rein. Fourth and highest is the level of those who are by nature good and wise, who possess from birth sure and steady reason. This stage, which is considered higher than mankind, is assigned to god, that is, to the universe, in which of necessity there exists complete and unqualified reason.

For any complex entity there is an ultimate and perfected condition. For example, in the case of a vine or livestock, we note that the entity proceeds to a natural ultimate state, unless some obstacle gets in the way. So, too, just as painting, architecture and the rest of the arts achieve a state of perfection, to a like and even greater degree there must be for every natural entity a state in which perfection has been achieved. For all other natural entities external obstacles can block the path to perfection. But there is nothing that can impede universal nature because it contains and controls all natural entities. Therefore there has to be a fourth and ultimate stage that is susceptible to no other force.

This is the level on which the essential nature of all reality is placed. Because this nature is such that it presides over everything and can be impeded by nothing, it necessarily follows that the universe is intelligent and even wise.¹¹

But what is more ignorant than to deny that the natural entity that embraces everything is the best such entity, or, granting it is the best, to deny first that it is animate and second that it possesses reason and foresight, finally, that it is wise? In what other sense could it be 'best'? If it resembled plants or animals, it would be considered worst not best. And if it has some share of reason without having been wise from the outset, then its condition is worse than that of humans, since a human being can become wise, whereas the universe, if it has been unwise for the eternal duration of past time, will surely never attain wisdom! So it will be inferior to man, which is a patent absurdity. As a consequence the universe must be considered wise and a god from its beginning.

For there is nothing other than the universe. It lacks nothing and is everywhere orderly and perfect and complete in its distinctive parts. As Chrysippus¹² cleverly observes, just as a shield case was created for the sake of the shield and a sheath for the sake of a sword, with the

exception of the universe everything was created for the sake of something else: the fruits and grains of the earth for the sake of animals, animals for the sake of men, for example, the horse for carrying, the ox for ploughing, the dog for hunting and guarding. Man himself arose for the sake of contemplating and imitating the universe – in no sense is he perfect but he constitutes a tiny piece of perfection.

But because the universe embraces everything, and nothing exists that is not within it, it is everywhere perfect. What can a perfect being then possibly be in need of? Nothing is better than mind and reason; therefore the universe does not lack these. The same Chrysippus makes good use of analogy when he explains that everything is better in mature and complete specimens; for example in a horse as opposed to a colt, a dog as opposed to a puppy, a man as opposed to a boy. Just so, the best thing in the world must be present in whatever is complete and absolute, and there being nothing more complete than the universe and nothing better than virtue, virtue must be a characteristic of the universe. The nature of man is not perfect, yet virtue is achieved within humankind, and thus much more easily within the universe. The world possesses virtue, it is wise, it is god.

Having acknowledged the divinity of the universe, let us assign the same divinity to the constellations. They are born from the liveliest and purest part of the upper sky or aether, unmixed with any other element, entirely hot and brilliant, so that it is entirely correct to say that they are animate and sentient and intelligent.

Cleanthes thinks that the fiery nature of the stars is confirmed by our senses of touch and sight. For the heat and glow of the sun is more brilliant than any fire, in that it illuminates the length and breadth of the universe; its touch both warms and burns, neither of which it could do were it not fiery. ‘Therefore,’ he says, ‘since the sun is fiery and fed by the moisture of Ocean,’ (because no fire can persist without fuel) ‘it must resemble either the fire that we use in daily life or the fire contained in the bodies of living creatures. The fire sought for daily use destroys and consumes everything; wherever it invades it causes turmoil and disintegration. The vital and healthful fire of the body protects everything, it nourishes, augments, sustains and supplies sensation.’¹³ And so, he concludes, there can be no doubt which of these types of fire the sun resembles, since it also causes everything to flourish and mature in accordance with its kind. Therefore, since the fire of the sun resembles the fire found in animate bodies, the sun also must be animate – so, too, the other stars that originate in the celestial bonfire called aether or heaven.

Now because some animals originate in the earth, some in water, some in the lower atmosphere, it would seem absurd, according to Aristotle, to think that no animal comes into being in that sector of the universe most suited for the propagation of animate beings.¹⁴ The constellations occupy the upper atmosphere, which, because it is most refined and always in motion and vigorous, whatever animal comes to be in it must be possessed of keenest sensation and swiftest movement. Therefore since stars emerge in the upper atmosphere, it follows that they possess sense and intelligence, thus leading us to conclude that stars are to be counted in the number of the gods.

For it can be observed that inhabitants of regions in which the air is pure and fine have sharper wits, more suited to understanding, than those who live in a dense and clogged climate. It's even thought that the food you eat makes a difference in mental acuity. It's likely therefore that the intelligence of the stars is of a high order, for they inhabit the ethereal realm and are nourished by moisture from land and sea that has been thinned out over the course of a long distance.

But the greatest indicator of the intelligence of stars is their steady, orderly movement, without haste, variation or chance. Nothing can move to such a patterned rhythm without design. The orderliness of the constellations and their steadfast movement through eternity are not simply automatic (for their nature is fully rational), nor the work of fortune, which loves variety and rejects consistency. It follows therefore that they move of their own volition, thanks to their own judgement and divine power.¹⁵

Aristotle deserves recognition for his view that all movement originates either by nature or by force or by intent. The sun and moon and constellations move, but objects that move by nature travel either up or down, depending on their weight, neither of which describes the stars, for they follow circular orbits. And we can't say that some greater force causes stars to move contrary to their nature – for what could that greater force be? The only remaining possibility is that the movement of stars is voluntary. And anyone who accepts that point but denies the existence of gods is impious, not to mention ignorant. And it doesn't make much difference whether he denies their existence or just their providential action. As far as I'm concerned,¹⁶ a being that doesn't act might as well not exist. It's so clear that gods exist that I can scarcely believe that anyone who denies it is of sound mind.

Wisdom Across the Ages

Tusculan Disputations 5.5–11

In the introduction to Book 5 of his Tusculan Disputations, Cicero expatiates on the wonders of philosophy, offering a veritable hymn to its contributions to human life, past and present. He emphasizes the continuity between various wisdom traditions and the scholastic philosophy of his own day. Just as the human spirit looks outward to comprehend the movements of the stars and other marvels of nature, it looks back in time as well, surveying the wisdom of its predecessors. Cicero places himself in the steady flow of history.

In order to correct this fault¹ – and all of our vices and errors – we must turn to philosophy. At an early age we eagerly sought her welcome. Now, tempest-tossed by the gravest disasters, we seek refuge in the harbour from which we set forth. Philosophy! Guide of life, you search for virtue and drive out vice. What kind of life – for us, for all humanity – would have been possible without you? You gave rise to cities, called scattered souls into human society, joined us to one another through home and marriage, writing and shared speech. You invented law, taught custom and morality. In you we take refuge, from you we seek aid. We who once were largely yours now dedicate ourselves to you entirely. A single day lived with your guidance is preferable to an eternity of error.

Whom can we rely on for help besides you? It is you who have endowed life with serenity, you who have removed the fear of death. Yet far from praising you as you deserve for your part in human life, most neglect you, many even censure you. How is it possible to censure life's parent, to lower oneself to parricide, to accuse the very one we should revere – and yet not even know her? The souls of the ignorant are befuddled with error because they lack historical vision and fail to recognize that those who first guided human life were in fact philosophers.

Although the term 'philosophy' is recent, the practice is of the greatest antiquity. There's no denying that 'wisdom' is an ancient concept and word, a magnificent term assigned by the ancients to

knowledge of divine and human affairs and of the beginnings and causes of everything. The Seven Sages of the Greeks (called ‘wise men’ in Latin), and centuries earlier Lycurgus (who lived in the time of Homer before the founding of Rome), and Ulysses and Nestor² of the heroic age: all these we accept as real and as wise. There’d have been no Atlas holding up the heavens or Prometheus chained to Mount Caucasus or Cepheus transformed into a constellation along with his wife, his son-in-law and his daughter had there been no divine knowledge of the heavens to consign their names to myth.³

Moving forward in time, all who devoted themselves to contemplation were held to be wise, with the designation continuing right up to the time of Pythagoras.⁴ Of him Heraclides Ponticus,⁵ a leading scholar and student of Plato, writes that he came to Phlius where he shared his abundant learning with prince Leon. When Leon, marvelling at his brilliance and eloquence asked him what skill he employed, he answered that he knew no skill, but was a philosopher. Struck by the novelty of the word, Leon further inquired what it meant to be a philosopher, and what differentiated a philosopher from everyone else. Pythagoras answered by saying that life is like a spectacular gathering of all of Greece: some come to win the crown of victory in athletic competition, some are enticed by the profit to be made in buying and selling, while one group of people – by far the most noble – come seeking neither applause nor profit, but for the sake of watching and observing what happens and how. Just as people leave their city to attend a festival, just so, setting out from a different kind of existence, some devote themselves to glory, others to money. But a certain few, disdaining everything else, eagerly observe nature. These call themselves lovers of wisdom, in other words, philosophers. And just as the person with the greatest freedom at a festival is the one who observes without looking to acquire anything, so in life contemplation and inquiry into nature far surpass all other pursuits.

Pythagoras didn’t just invent the term philosophy, he also expanded its range. After this conversation in Phlius, he moved to Italy, there embellishing Magna Graecia⁶ with extraordinary arts and institutions, both private and public. Perhaps at another time I’ll speak of the content of his philosophy. But from the earliest days down to Socrates, who listened to Archelaus, the student of Anaxagoras,⁷ philosophers dealt with number and motion, with coming into being and fading away, and zealously sought to determine the size, distance and movement of the constellations, indeed, studied all things celestial.

Socrates was the first to call philosophy down from the sky, to place

it in cities, to introduce it even into homes, to force it to consider life and customs, good and evil. Plato preserved in writing his many modes of argumentation, his range of topics, and his extraordinary brilliance, thereby making possible many dissenting philosophical schools. Of these we follow the approach we believe Socrates himself used, keeping our own opinion to ourselves, releasing others from error, and in every conversation seeking the point of view that most closely resembles the truth. This is the technique Carneades⁸ employed, with great insight and eloquence, and we have often set about to do the same, most recently in Tusculum. I've already sent you a written version of the first four days of discussion. Now here's the topic debated on our fifth day in the same location: is virtue sufficient for a happy life?

Philosophy and Oppression

On Divination 2.1–7

Cicero's composition of his treatise On Divination was interrupted by Caesar's assassination in March of 44 BCE and the turmoil it provoked. Thus, at the outset of the second book of the treatise, Cicero takes stock of his philosophical work so far and outlines what remains, should the renewed demands of public life permit. He describes philosophy as an extension of his political projects and a better response to oppression than various forms of acting out. He retroactively describes the works he composed during Caesar's dictatorship as his own contribution to the well-being of Roman society at a time when normal political action was impossible.

Because it's my intention never to stop considering the needs of the Republic, I've spent a lot of time wondering how to be of use to the greatest number of our citizens. The best I can come up with is to transmit an outline of the most important arts, as I've already attempted in a number of books. In *Hortensius*, I've exhorted readers in the strongest possible terms to study philosophy, and in the four books of the *Academics*¹ I've introduced the type of philosophy I consider least pretentious and most coherent and elegant. Because philosophy is based on an understanding of the ultimate in good and evil, I devoted five books to that issue, trying to explain what has been said on the topic by and against each philosopher. Five books of *Tusculan Disputations* then explored the conditions of happiness: the first on despising death, the second on enduring pain, the third on lessening distress, the fourth on the remaining disturbances of the soul, the fifth teaching that virtue alone suffices for happiness – an argument which wins philosophy its greatest glory.

After these, I completed three books *On the Nature of the Gods* which considered the question from every side. In order to bring that topic to completion, I've begun the present books *On Divination*. When I've added a projected book *On Fate*,² the whole issue will have received satisfactory attention. We should supplement this list with the six books *On the Republic*,³ which I wrote while still at the head of the

government. It's an important philosophical subject, richly considered by Plato, Aristotle, Theophrastus and the whole of the Peripatetic sect. What can I say about my *Consolation*?⁴ As much solace as it gave me, I believe it helped others a great deal as well. There's also the recent book *On Old Age*,⁵ addressed to Atticus. Because good and brave men are fashioned by philosophy above all, our *Cato* is to be included among this list of philosophical works. And because Aristotle and Theophrastus, both excellent men, subtle and expressive writers, supplemented philosophy with precepts of eloquence, my own oratorical books can also be honoured as philosophical: three *About the Orator*, the fourth called *Brutus*, the fifth simply *Orator*.⁶

So far so good. As for the rest, I was so keen to proceed that by now no branch of philosophy would be unavailable in Latin, if only dire circumstances had not intervened. What greater gift can I confer on the Republic than teaching its young, especially when the present state of affairs has so unsettled them that it requires the combined efforts of all to set them on the right course again? I don't expect – or require – that all young people turn to these studies. If only a few would! Their effort could have an effect throughout the state. I also consider my labour repaid by older readers who grow serene by reading my books. Day by day their eagerness to read intensifies my eagerness to write. I've come to learn that there are more of them than I thought. It's a great and wonderful thing for the people of Rome not to be without the philosophical writings of the Greeks – which I will see to if I complete my plan.

Indeed, it was the downfall of the state that gave me reason to write philosophy, when in the midst of civil conflict I could do nothing to protect the Republic as I had in the past. I found nothing suitable that I would rather do. My fellow citizens will thus forgive me, perhaps even thank me, because when the state was in the control of a single individual I did not hide myself away, or desert it or assault it or act outraged at the man or the times or flatter the fortune of another so as to make me regret my own. One thing I've learned from Plato and philosophy is that political change is natural, with governments run sometimes by aristocracies, sometimes by the common people, and at times by individuals.

When this had happened to our Republic and I was deprived of my earlier responsibilities, I began to renew these studies in order to relieve my disappointment in the best possible way and benefit my fellow citizens however I could. For in these books I have, in effect, proposed legislation, debated before the people, and used philosophy

as a substitute for the guardianship of the public good. Now that we have begun to be consulted about public affairs, we must give our attention to the state – indeed, all thought and care is to be directed to it. Still, whatever is free from public duty is to be devoted to this project.

Friendship

Laelius, or On Friendship (Entire)

Although written in the autumn of 44 BCE, the dialogue re-creates a conversation whose fictional date is 129 BCE, shortly after the death of the Roman general Scipio Aemilianus. According to Cicero, the sons-in-law of Scipio's close friend, Laelius, impose upon him to discuss his relationship with Scipio and provide general advice on friendship. Although the Latin word translated as 'friend' often had the connotation of 'political ally', Laelius/Cicero proposes an ethical view of friendship as a partnership in doing good. The intensity of Laelius' defence of friendship suggests that there were those who considered it of doubtful or at best utilitarian value. In line with Cicero's modified Stoicism, Laelius describes friendship as a necessary component of a life in accordance with nature. Cicero thus revives Roman ideals that accord with Greek philosophy, while resisting what he considers the misuse of philosophy to support the worst tendencies of his contemporaries. The dialogue opens with a brief tribute to some of the friendships that have enriched Cicero's own life and provide a context for the transmittal of personal and cultural memory.

The augur Quintus Mucius Scaevola liked to reminisce about his father-in-law Gaius Laelius, whom he never hesitated to call by his popular nickname, 'the sage'.¹ When I put on the toga of manhood, my own father handed me over to Scaevola,² who was already old, hoping I would stay at his side as long as possible. Eager to benefit from Scaevola's good judgement, I made a point of remembering his many sensible opinions and his many short, useful sayings. After he died, I attached myself to the pontifex Scaevola, who – I'm not afraid to say – had the best legal mind in all of Rome. But more about him at another time, for now, back to the augur.

Although I was with him often, there's one occasion in particular that I recall. He was sitting, as he liked to, on the terrace on his estate. A few companions and I were present when he took up a topic that then was very much in the air. Surely, Atticus, you remember that old acquaintance of yours, Publius Sulpicius – and his bitter struggle with Quintus Pompeius³ when he was tribune and Pompeius was consul.

Previously Sulpicius had been very close, even affectionate with Pompeius – their admiration and their enmity were both remarkable.

Reminded of that situation, Scaevola shared with us what Laelius had said about friendship during a conversation the two of them had held, together with Laelius' other son-in-law, Gaius Fannius, a few days after the death of Africanus.⁴ I committed to memory the views expressed in that discussion and now I've set them forth in this book in my own way. The characters have been given direct speech to avoid constant interruption with 'I say' or 'he said', and also to make it seem as though the conversation is taking place before our eyes, with the speakers actually present.

After all, you've often encouraged me to write something about friendship – a topic that strikes me as worthy of everybody's consideration and well-suited to our relationship. So I've gladly done just that, hoping to be of use to many others while also responding to your request. I've adopted the same style as in my *Cato the Elder*. In that essay, which I addressed to you on the subject of old age, I made Cato, in his old age, the main speaker.⁵ No character seemed better suited to talk about that period of life than a man who was old for a very long time and who prospered in old age more than anyone else. In this case, because we have it from our ancestors that the most memorable friendship was that of Gaius Laelius and Publius Scipio, Laelius seemed just the person to introduce the various ideas about friendship that Scaevola said he had expressed. For reasons I can't quite explain, a dialogue attributed to men of old, especially those of good reputation, just seems more authoritative. When I go back and read what I've written, I almost feel that it's Cato speaking, not me.

In that book I wrote as an old man to an old man about old age. Here I've written about friendship to a friend in the friendliest way possible. In the previous work, Cato spoke, because he was virtually the oldest man in his times, and definitely the shrewdest. Now Laelius will speak about friendship, because he was truly wise, and superior to all others in his reputation as a friend. So please, turn your attention from me and instead imagine that Laelius is speaking. Gaius Fannius and Quintus Mucius are here; they've come to their father-in-law's just after the death of Africanus. They start the conversation, and Laelius responds. The whole discussion concerns friendship. In reading it, you will come to know yourself.

Fannius: I agree, *Laelius:* there never was a better or more distinguished man than Africanus. But you have to realize that all eyes

now are turned towards you and you alone. People call you ‘wise’ – and they really mean it. Marcus Cato had the same reputation, and our ancestors, we know, called Lucius Acilius⁶ ‘wise’ – although for different reasons. Acilius was an expert in civil law, Cato had multiple talents. In both the Senate and the Forum he was a good strategist, a steady adviser and a witty debater – so much so, that in his old age, ‘wise’ was virtually his last name.

You are wise in still another way: not just in your nature and morals, but also thanks to your learning and knowledge. You meet the standards of learned men rather than the common herd. In Greece as a whole there’s not a single person regarded as wise in this way – even the Seven Sages fall short in the judgement of those who examine the matter closely. In Athens there was only one such sage, the man judged wisest of all by the oracle of Apollo.⁷ People say your wisdom consists in your belief that your entire well-being is in your own power and that the circumstances of human life matter less than virtue. That’s why they ask me (and Scaevola too, if I’m not mistaken) how you are bearing the death of Africanus. They’re especially interested, given your absence last Nones⁸ when we got together as usual at the gardens of the augur Decimus Brutus for our deliberations. Previously you’d been scrupulous about observing the day and the obligation.

Scaevola: It’s true, Laelius: many people are inquiring, just as Fannius reports. Of course I answer that as far as I can tell you are bearing the sorrow caused by the death of your most distinguished friend with moderation. It’s impossible not to be affected, and it wouldn’t fit your humane disposition. As for your absence at our meeting on the Nones, I tell them it was due to sickness, not sorrow.

Laelius: Your answer is appropriate, Scaevola, not to mention true. For it wouldn’t have been right to shirk the obligation you mention – one I always fulfilled when my health permitted – even under trying circumstances. I don’t think there’s any contingency that entitles a responsible person to take a holiday from duty.

As for you, Fannius, it’s kind of you to report what’s being said about me, although I don’t seek such praise or put any credit in it. But you are wrong, I think, in your judgement of Cato: either – as I am more inclined to believe – no one has ever been wise, or if anyone has, he’s the one. Leaving aside everything else, just stop and consider how he endured the death of his son. I remember Paullus and Galus,⁹

but their sons died in boyhood. Cato lost his when he was an accomplished and respected man. So be careful when you rank Cato behind even that favourite of yours whom Apollo, as you rightly note, judged wisest. He was praised for his words, Cato for his deeds.

In any case, I want to speak to both of you now and tell you how things stand with me. Whether it would be right for me to deny that I feel regret at the loss of Scipio, I'll let the sages decide. But I would certainly be lying. I grieve for the loss of a friend such as I suspect never will be and I know never was. Still, I'm not without relief, for I console myself with the realization that I am not making the mistake many others do when they are heartbroken at the death of a friend. I know that nothing bad has happened to Scipio; it has happened to me if it has happened at all. And to be heartbroken by one's own loss is a mark not of a friend but of a self-lover.

Who could deny that Scipio led a brilliant life? Except for immortality, which didn't interest him in the least, is there anything he failed to achieve that it's right for a human being to desire? The great expectations the citizens held for him from boyhood, he surpassed already as an adolescent. He never sought the consulate, yet he became consul twice, first before the minimum age, second at the right age, but almost too late for the state. He destroyed two cities¹⁰ that were supremely hostile to our empire and in so doing put a stop to present and future wars. What am I to say about his accommodating manner, his devotion to his mother, generosity to his sisters, goodness towards his friends, justice to all? These are well known to you. It's evident from the grief at his funeral just how much the whole citizen body cherished him.

I ask you: what benefit could the addition of a few years have brought to him? Old age may not be a burden – as I remember Cato saying when he chatted with Scipio and me the year before his own death – but it does take away the vitality that Scipio enjoyed until the end. In short, his life was unsurpassed in fortune or in fame, and the swiftness of his death carried off any awareness of dying. Just how he died, it's difficult to say. You know what men suspect.¹¹ But this much can be said: of the many full and happy days Scipio witnessed during his lifetime, the most glorious was the very day preceding his death, when senators, the Roman people and the Latin allies all accompanied him home in the evening after the Senate was adjourned. So lofty was his status that he seems to have passed on to the gods above rather than the powers below.

For I don't agree with those who have recently begun to teach that

the soul perishes with the body and that everything is wiped out by death. I would rather put my trust in the men of old,¹² our ancestors in particular, who tell of awesome trials convened among the dead – which they wouldn't have reported if they believed that nothing mattered after death; or in those whose doctrines and precepts civilized Magna Graecia, back in its heyday, although it's now been ruined; or in that fellow called 'most wise' by Apollo's oracle – he claimed that the human soul, being always the same, not varying over time like most things, is actually divine, and that once it leaves the body a path to heaven lies open, quickest and easiest for the best and most just.

Scipio believed the same thing. Indeed, he more or less foretold it during that three-day discussion¹³ on the nature of the state that he conducted shortly before his death. Philus, Manilius, and many others were there; you came too, Scaevola, as my companion. Virtually the last topic of conversation then was the immortality of the soul, which Scipio claimed to have learned about from Africanus in a dream. If it's really the case that the souls of the best men easily slip away in death, as if from the chains and prison of the body, whose journey to the gods would we expect to be easier than Scipio's?

So it's more a sign of envy than of friendship, I fear, to lament what's happened to him. And even if that other set of teachings is true, that soul and body die together and no sensation remains, that there is nothing good in death and certainly nothing bad, that the absence of sensation is the same as not having been born: well then still we rejoice in the fact that Scipio was born – and this city, too, will rejoice as long as it exists.

This is why, as I said before, things have turned out best for him, rather less so for me. Having entered life earlier, by rights I should have exited it earlier as well. Still, I find such joy in the recollection of our friendship that my life seems blessed for having been spent with Scipio. He and I were linked by our shared concern for public and private affairs. We were together at home and on military duty. And we were in full agreement in our priorities, commitments and opinions – which is the essence of friendship. So it's not any reputation for wisdom of the sort Fannius just mentioned that makes me happy, especially because it's false; rather, I take pleasure in hoping that the memory of our friendship will last forever, even more so when I consider that out of all generations, scarcely three or four pairs of friends are remembered by name. I let myself hope that among them posterity will count the friendship of Scipio and Laelius.

Fannius: It has to turn out that way, *Laelius*! But since you have just mentioned friendship and we are at leisure, you would be doing me a big favour – and *Scaevola*, too, I expect – if you would provide an analysis of friendship, as you do when other topics are proposed. What significance do you assign to it? What value do you place on it? What precepts of friendship can you offer?

Scaevola. I'd like that very much, too. *Fannius* anticipated just the kind of discussion I've been wanting to have with you. You'd make both of us extremely grateful.

Laelius: I wouldn't object, if only I had confidence in my ability. The topic is a worthy one, and as *Fannius* pointed out, we are at leisure. But why ask me? What talent do I have for this sort of thing? You describe the practice of learned men, Greeks in particular, who can discuss the pros and cons of a topic proposed to them right on the spot. That's a difficult task, one that requires no small amount of practice. You'd be better off consulting the professionals for an analysis of friendship. As for me, I can only urge you to rank friendship above all other human concerns. There is nothing so well suited to our nature, nothing so helpful in good times or in bad.

Still, here's my first proposition: there can be no friendship except among people who are good. I don't use the term 'good' in an overly restrictive sense, like some who discuss these matters very precisely, maybe even truthfully, but without regard for practicality. They deny that anyone is good except the wise man.¹⁴ Fair enough. But they define wisdom in such a way that no mortal has yet achieved it, when surely we should be examining everyday usage and lived experience, not idealizations. Following their norms, I would never claim that *Gaius Fabricius*, *Manius Curius* or *Tiberius Coruncanius*, whom our ancestors regarded as wise, were indeed sages.¹⁵ So they might as well keep that obscure and elitist type of wisdom for themselves – let them just agree that these men were good. They won't even do this! They'll deny that anyone but 'the sage' can be considered good.

So let's continue in our own clumsy way. People whose life and conduct display reliability, integrity, fairness and generosity, who avoid greed, sensuality and reckless conduct, and do so consistently, like the Romans named earlier: let's agree that they deserve their reputations as good men, for they follow nature as the best guide of life, as much as is humanly possible. Now it is my observation of human nature that there is a certain connection among all of us, more

powerful in accordance with each person's proximity. We have a stronger tie with citizens than with foreigners, with acquaintances than with strangers. Nature itself has established friendship with those who are near, but such friendship is not sufficiently stable. For friendship has an advantage over proximity in that good will can be removed from proximity, but not from friendship. Take away good will and the very idea of friendship is gone too; not so with mere physical closeness. The power of friendship is also apparent from the fact that in contrast to all the other natural and normal connections among human beings, friendship is so intense and focused that its bonds of affection unite at most two or just a few.

For friendship is nothing other than agreement about divine and human affairs, accompanied by good will and affection. With the exception of wisdom, I know of no better gift from the immortal gods to humankind. Some prefer riches, others good health, power or honours; many even rank pleasure higher. The last is fit for beasts while the others are fleeting and unreliable: they depend not on our considered judgement but on the whim of fortune. As for those who say virtue is the highest good, they surely make an excellent choice. But the virtue they have in mind gives rise to friendship and includes it, and friendship does not exist in the absence of virtue. Furthermore, let's use 'virtue' in its normal meaning, not parsing it with pretentious terminology the way some philosophers do, and let's keep counting the Paulli, Catos, Gali, Scipios and Philos among the good.¹⁶ Real life is satisfied with them; we can skip over those who are nowhere to be found!

To men like the ones just mentioned, friendship provides advantages almost too great for me to describe. In the first place, how can a life be 'fully alive',¹⁷ as Ennius says, without the serenity provided by the mutual good will of a friend? What is sweeter than to have someone you can freely discuss everything with as you would with yourself? What good would there be in success if you had no one who could share your enjoyment? It would be difficult, to say the least, to put up with adversity without a friend who feels it even more acutely than you do. Other things we seek tend to have a single purpose: riches are for spending, resources for investment, honour in order to be praised, pleasure for enjoyment, health in order to avoid pain and make use of our bodies. Friendship encompasses the greatest number of benefits.

Whichever way you turn, there it is! Nowhere is it excluded, at no time is it inappropriate, it never causes annoyance. Not even the

proverbial fire and water¹⁸ do we use in more contexts than friendship. (Of course I am not speaking now about a common or mediocre sort of friendship, although even that can bring pleasure and profit, but about true and perfected friendships, those few that are identified by name.) For friendship makes prosperity more splendid and adversity more bearable through sharing and exchange.

Among the many great benefits of friendship, one stands out above all others: friendship shines the light of hope into the future and keeps the spirit from becoming weak or stumbling. Looking at a true friend is like seeing an image of yourself. Even when absent, friends are near; although poor, they bring riches, although weak they are strong, and what is especially hard to express, although dead they live – for respect, memory and longing pursue them. In this way the dead are blessed and the living worthy of praise.

But if you remove from the natural order the unifying force of good will, no house or city can stand, even the cultivation of fields will cease. In case this point isn't clear, you can recognize the power of friendship and harmony from instances of dissension and discord. What house is so stable, what city so firm, that it can't be destroyed utterly by hatred and division? – which is how we can properly measure the good in friendship.

Tradition has it that a certain learned man of Agrigentum sang Greek verses in which he proclaimed that everything in the universe, whether permanent or transitory, is united by friendship, torn asunder by discord.¹⁹ All mortals agree and bear witness through their actions. Let's say a friend does an outstanding service by joining his friend in confronting danger: who among us fails to praise this action to the utmost? What shouts there were throughout the whole theatre recently at the performance of a new play by my guest and friend Pacuvius!²⁰ When the king was uncertain which of two men was Orestes, Pylades said *he* was Orestes, in order to be killed in his place, while Orestes kept insisting that he was who he was. The audience gave a standing ovation for a fictional deed. What do we think they would have done for a real one? Nature provided clear evidence of its own power when people judged that others behaved correctly in doing what they themselves wouldn't be able to.

Those are all the thoughts I have to offer about friendship. If you wish, go ahead and inquire further of people who specialize in these topics. I'm sure I've passed over quite a bit.

Fannius: But we'd rather hear from you! Although it's true I've often

questioned and listened to the kind of people you mention,²¹ and quite willingly I might add. Still, your discussion follows a different thread.

Scaevola: You'd say so even more, Fannius, if you'd been in the gardens of Scipio when there was an all-out debate about the Republic. Laelius was quite the defender of justice against the elaborate speech of Philus.

Fannius: It must have been easy for a just man to defend justice!

Scaevola: What? And you don't think it's easy for him to defend friendship? Especially when maintaining a friendship thanks to his loyalty, reliability and sense of justice is what's made him famous?

Laelius: This really is an assault! Well, what difference does it make how you go about forcing me? You force me all the same. For it's difficult, not to mention unfair, to interfere with sons-in-law, especially when they're after something good.

So then it's true. I have thought often about friendship. And when I do, one matter in particular strikes me as requiring further consideration: do we desire friendship because we are weak and helpless? That is, do we participate in the give and take of benefits in order to receive and then return precisely what we are least capable of providing for ourselves? Or is this just an accidental feature of friendship, which has a natural basis more ancient and more beautiful? Isn't love (from which our word for friendship is derived²²) the real force behind the sharing of good will? After all, even false and opportunistic friends perceive some advantage in the relationship. But in real friendship there is nothing false or simulated, only what is true and freely chosen.

So it seems that friendship arises from nature rather than from need, from the inclination of the soul accompanied by a certain sentiment of love, rather than from calculation of a relationship's potential usefulness. The truth of this claim is evident even in the case of certain wild animals. For a period of time they so love their offspring and are so loved in turn by them that their feelings are obvious. The situation is even more evident among humans. First, there is the shared affection between children and parents, which can only be dislodged by terrible crime. Then, too, there's a similar feeling of love that comes into being when we meet someone whose nature and morals are compatible with ours, for we think we see integrity and virtue burning brightly in them.

For nothing is more lovable than virtue, and nothing more easily entices us to feel affection. Even people we've never met, we cherish for their virtue and integrity. Who doesn't recall Gaius Fabricius or Manius Curius²³ with warmth and good will, even though we've never seen them? And who doesn't feel hatred towards Tarquin the Proud, Spurius Cassius and Spurius Maelius?²⁴ Both Pyrrhus and Hannibal²⁵ were foreign generals who fought bitterly for control of Italy. Thanks to his decency, we are not particularly hostile to Pyrrhus. Thanks to his cruelty, we Romans will hate Hannibal forever.

Well, if the appeal of decency or goodness is so great that we cherish it in those we have never met, and even in an enemy, is it any wonder that our feelings are affected when we perceive the virtue and goodness of people with whom we *are* familiar? Favours and attention and companionship strengthen love by being brought to bear on a pre-existing sentiment. When that happens, all you can do is marvel at the intensity of good will that catches fire. If anyone thinks this has its origin in human frailty and the pursuit of something we lack, it's a humble and unimpressive birth he's assigning to friendship, making it the child of poverty and want. It would mean that the less a person thinks of his own abilities, the more fit he'd be for friendship – which obviously isn't true.

Indeed, the more confident you are, the greater your own virtue and good sense, the less needy and the more self-reliant you are, the greater success you'll have in making and keeping friends. What do you think? Did Africanus have need of me? Not at all! And I didn't have need of him. I loved him because I admired his virtue. He loved me in return, perhaps because he had a favourable opinion of my character. Companionship strengthened our good will. And although our friendship brought us many benefits, anticipating them wasn't the reason for our affection.

We don't practise generosity in order to secure gratitude, nor do we invest our gifts in the hope of a favourable return. Rather, it is nature that inclines us towards generosity. Just so, we don't seek friendship with an expectation of gain, but regard the feeling of love as its own reward.

It's no wonder that those who are interested only in pleasure (just like cattle!) disagree with what I say.²⁶ All their thoughts are low and dirty, so they're unable to set their sights on anything lofty, magnificent, or divine. Let's just dismiss them from our discussion and recognize that feelings of love and good will arise naturally whenever there's an indication of a person's goodness. People who are on the

lookout for it draw closer in order to enjoy the companionship and the character of the one they have begun to love. They strive to be partners in love, equals in doing favours rather than in seeking their return. In this way there's an honourable rivalry between them. They will obtain great advantages from their friendship, which has its deep and true origin in nature, not weakness. For if advantage were the glue of friendship, its alteration would dissolve the bond. Because nature cannot change, true friendships are eternal. There you have the origin of friendship – unless you have something you want to add?

Fannius: Please just continue, *Laelius*. And [*turning to Scaevola*] I'll exercise my prerogative to answer for this youngster here as well.

Scaevola: I agree. Let's just listen.

Laelius: Listen, indeed, gentlemen, to what Scipio and I used to say during our frequent discussions of friendship. It was his view that it's the hardest thing for a friendship to persist until the last day of life. Often enough life doesn't work out the same for both, or they have different political views, or character changes, sometimes due to difficult circumstances or just the onset of old age. Scipio liked to draw an analogy with growing up, noting that boys tend to set aside their greatest passions along with their childish clothes. Even those who stay friends through adolescence can be pulled apart by competition, maybe for the same wife or for some opportunity that they can't both acquire. And if a friendship gets beyond this stage, it can still collapse if the friends find themselves candidates for the same political office. In general, love of money is the greatest threat to friendship. Among prominent men, it is the struggle for honour and glory – which explains why the greatest political rivalries often develop between the closest friends.

Scipio also argued that serious and justifiable differences arise if one friend asks another to do something wrong, for example, to help him indulge his sexual desires or commit an injustice. The one who refuses the request, even if he does so tactfully, is likely to be charged with violating the rules of friendship by the one he turned down. Those who would dare to make such a demand on a friend, by that very demand reveal that they themselves would do anything for a friend's sake. Their tiresome appeals can spoil good relations and even create lifelong animosities. A friendship can meet with so many bad fates, Scipio used to say, that it takes both wisdom and luck to avoid them

all.

So if you don't mind, let's first see just how far affection should extend in friendship. If Coriolanus had friends, would we say that they were obliged to join him in waging war against the ancestral homeland?²⁷ Or that the friends of Vecellinus or Maelius²⁸ were obliged to help them seize power?

In our own time we've seen Tiberius Gracchus abandoned by Quintus Tubero and other close friends because he was threatening the state.²⁹ Yet Gaius Blossius of Cumae³⁰ – a guest of your own family, Scaevola – came to me while I was meeting with the consuls Laenas and Rupilius to seek forgiveness on the grounds that he held Tiberius Gracchus in such high regard that he felt obliged to do whatever he asked. When I said, 'And what if he asked you to set fire to the Capitol?' he answered, 'Gracchus would never ask that, but if he did, I would obey.' Do you understand what a wicked saying this is! By God, he did even more than he said he would: he didn't just go along with Gracchus' boldness, he took charge of it! He was his leader, not his disciple in outrage. Deranged as he was, he became terrified at the thought of a legal inquiry, and fled to Asia. There he joined our enemies, but he ended up paying a fitting penalty³¹ for his crimes against the Republic. Doing wrong for the sake of a friend never justifies that wrong. Belief in a friend's virtue sustains the friendship. It's hard for the friendship to continue once the virtue is gone.

If we decreed that it's right to give friends whatever they wish and to expect from them whatever we wish, no harm would come of it, provided we possessed complete and total wisdom. But we're talking here about the sorts of friends we see right before our eyes or have been told about, friends who exist in real life. Let's find our examples in this group, in particular among those who come closest to being wise. We've learned from our ancestors that Gaius Luscinius was a friend of Papus Aemilius (they were consuls together twice and colleagues in the censorship). Tradition also has it that Manius Curius and Tiberius Coruncanius³² were very close to them and to each other. It's impossible even to suspect that any of these men asked a friend to go back on his word, break an oath or harm the Republic. And doesn't it go without saying that if someone else had made such a request of one of them, they wouldn't have granted it? These men were so honourable that they considered it equally wrong to commit or solicit any act of that sort. And yet Gaius Carbo and Gaius Cato decided to stick with Tiberius Gracchus.³³ So did his brother,³⁴ reluctantly at first, now with great enthusiasm.

Let's ratify the following law of friendship: don't ask for anything shameful, and don't do anything shameful if asked. As disgraceful and unacceptable as it is to try to excuse other sorts of wrongdoing on the grounds of friendship, it's even worse when someone admits to having harmed the Republic for the sake of a friend – especially now, Fannius and Scaevola, when we find ourselves in circumstances that oblige us to stay alert for any threat to the state, so far have we veered from the course set by our ancestors!

Tiberius Gracchus tried to rule as king. You might even say that for a few months he *was* king. The Roman people had never seen or heard of anything like it. And those friends and relatives who supported him even after his death! Their mistreatment of Publius Scipio! I can't talk about it without crying. As for Carbo, we've put up with him as much as we can because the punishment of Tiberius Gracchus is still recent. I'd just as soon not say what I expect from the tribunate of Gaius! Affairs creep along for now, but can rush to ruin once something gets started. You see what a debacle the issue of the ballot has become: first the Gabinian Law, then after two years the Cassian.³⁵ Now it looks as though the people are being set at odds with the Senate, while the most important matters are decided by the will of the mob. More men will learn how to cause this kind of trouble than how to resist it.

What am I getting at? Just this: without accomplices no one tries anything of the sort. Responsible citizens need to be taught that if through some mischance they stumble unwittingly into this kind of relationship, they are under no obligation to remain loyal to friends who are acting to the great detriment of the state. And the wicked must be punished, those who support others in sacrilege no less than those who take the lead. In Greece, who was better known than Themistocles?³⁶ Who more capable? As general he freed Greece from enslavement to Persia, only to be driven into exile due to envy. Instead of accepting this injustice at the hands of an ungrateful fatherland, as he should have, he took the same action Coriolanus had taken twenty years earlier in our own country. No one could be found to help either man attack his homeland. And so each ended up taking his own life. Far from being sheltered under the guise of friendship, wicked conspiracies of this sort should be punished to the full extent of the law, so that no one will think it permissible to support a friend who wages war against the fatherland – an eventuality I can't rule out the way things are going now. I'm worried about the Republic after my death no less than today.

So let this be the first and sacred law of friendship: seek only good from friends, do only good for the sake of friends – and don't wait to be asked! Be always attentive! Banish hesitation! Be ready to give advice freely! Take seriously the good advice of friends. Be ready to offer it openly, even forcefully, if the occasion demands – and also be ready to follow when it's been offered.

Now some of those who are considered wise in Greece have made the most amazing recommendation (not that there is anything too subtle for them!). They say that we should avoid having too many friendships, so that one person won't be burdened for the sake of many.³⁷ Enough and too much are each man's own affairs – it's too troublesome to be involved in those of others. They say it's best to hold the reins of friendship as loosely as possible, so you can draw them tight or release them as you wish. According to them, the essence of a good life is lack of anxiety, which can't be yours if you brood over too many matters.

I'm told that others³⁸ make an even more appalling argument, which I alluded to a little earlier. They say that friendship is to be sought for the sake of protection and assistance, not good will and affection, and that the less confidence and strength people have, the more aggressively they pursue friendship – which is why women seek the protection of friendship more than men, the poor more than the rich, the miserable more than those who are considered happy.

O brilliant wisdom! They might as well take the sun from the heavens when they take friendship from life! The immortal gods have given us nothing better or more enjoyable than friendship. What is this 'lack of anxiety' they speak of anyway? Something that appears attractive, but in reality is often quite shameful. It doesn't make sense to avoid some honest deed or action so as not to be anxious, or to set it aside once we've taken it on. If we avoid worry, we avoid virtue, too, since being virtuous necessarily entails some concern to avoid and despise its opposite. Good is 'anxious' to avoid evil, temperance to avoid lust, cowardice to avoid bravery. That's why you see that the just are caused the most pain by the unjust, the brave by the unwarlike, the modest by the outrageous. In other words, it's a characteristic of the well-ordered soul to rejoice in what's good and to be hurt by its opposite.

And so if the wise man sometimes suffers distress, which must be the case if we're not to believe that all human feeling has been ripped from his soul, why on earth would we want to get rid of friendship, if the only concern is that we might suffer some annoyance on account

of it? For if you take away emotion, what difference is there – not between a beast and a human being, but between a human being and a tree trunk or boulder or something of that sort? Those fellows who contend that virtue is hard and metallic really aren't worth listening to. In many circumstances, but especially in friendship, virtue is pliant and malleable, expanding when things go well for a friend, contracting when he's in difficulty. For this reason, the distress they speak of, which we must often accept for the sake of a friend, isn't sufficient grounds for eliminating friendship from life, any more than we would reject virtue on the grounds that it sometimes brings worry and trouble.

For what could be so absurd as to take pleasure in various inanimate entities, such as honour, glory, a building, clothing or bodily improvement, but not take pleasure in a living being endowed with virtue, who is capable of love and, as we might say, counter-love?³⁹ Surely there is nothing more enjoyable than the exchange of kindness or the sharing of interests and obligations.

Here is another point that it's right to add: nothing so entices and attracts anything to itself as likeness attracts friendship. It will readily be conceded as true that good people have affection for other good people and attach themselves to them as if joined by a natural kinship. For nothing is more eager and acquisitive for what is *like* itself than nature. From this, then, it is possible to conclude, as I see it, that good will is inevitable between good men: nature has established this as the source of friendship. But goodness is relevant to all men. Virtue isn't somehow inhuman, withdrawn and arrogant, but instead guards over entire populations and looks out for their wellbeing – something it obviously couldn't do if it shunned the affection of ordinary people.

Then, too, those who imagine that practical advantage is the motive for friendship would seem to destroy its loving bond. It isn't the advantage generated by a friend that makes us happy, but our very feeling of love for him. And whatever advantage does come from a friend is only enjoyable if it proceeds from his intention. It's far from being the case that friendship is cultivated because of need; on the contrary, the kindest and most generous people are those who have least need of others, thanks to their own wealth and resources, and especially their virtue, which is the greatest source of protection. Although I don't think I'd agree that friends must never have need of their friends. After all, how would I have demonstrated my commitment if Scipio had never required my advice or assistance at home or abroad? Friendship doesn't result from advantage, but

advantage does result from friendship.

So we aren't to listen to those voluptuaries who presume to discuss friendship, though they fail to grasp its theory or practice. In the name of gods and mortals, who on earth would wish to be showered with riches and to enjoy an abundance of every kind of possession if it meant not loving or being loved by another? Surely this is the life of tyrants: to be without trust, affection or reliable expectation of good will, always anxious and suspicious about everything, with no opportunity for friendship. For who could love the person he fears, or the person he thinks fears him? Tyrants may be treated to a pretence of affection, at least for a time, but once they run into trouble, as tends to happen, it becomes obvious how few friends they have. Tarquin is reported to have said that only in exile⁴⁰ did he come to know which friends were loyal and which weren't, now that he was unable to do favours for either. Although I'm amazed that he had any friends, given his arrogance and cruelty!

And just as his character made it impossible for him to acquire true friends, so for many exceptionally powerful people their riches prevent true friendships. Fortune is blind – and often blinds those she embraces. They get carried away by their own sense of superiority – and nothing is harder to put up with than a lucky fool! Then, too, it's been known to happen that people who were formerly of good character become transformed by high office, power or prosperity, and end up disregarding old friendships while devoting themselves to new ones.

But what could be more foolish than using wealth, skills and resources to acquire everything money can buy, such as horses, servants, fine clothing and expensive dinnerware without ever acquiring friends, the best and most beautiful equipment for life? When people acquire other goods, they don't even know for whom they're acquiring them, for whose benefit they're working so hard, because these things end up belonging to whoever is most powerful. But friendship is a sure and stable possession, so much so that even if everything else – the gifts of fortune, we might say – remains, a life that isn't shared with friends can't be very pleasing. Enough on this point.

Consider next the limits and boundaries of friendship. Here I'm familiar with three recommendations, none of which I endorse. The first is that we should treat a friend as we treat ourselves; second, that our good will towards friends should match and correspond to their good will towards us; and third, that our friends should value us as

much as we value ourselves.

I can't abide by any of these sentiments. The first – that we should apply the same energy to friends as we do towards ourselves – is false. There are many things that we would never do for our own sake, but will do for the sake of friends, such as begging and pleading with an unworthy person, or challenging or even hectoring someone. Such behaviour is inappropriate in dealing with our own affairs, but perfectly appropriate in the case of friends. There are many areas in which honourable men reduce their own advantages, or let them be reduced by others, to allow a friend to benefit instead.

The second opinion limits friendship to mere equality in actions and feelings. It calls friendship to account in a cheap and mean-spirited way in order to balance the books with debits and credits. True friendship is spendthrift; it doesn't worry about giving more than it receives; it isn't afraid to be wasteful, to let things fall by the wayside, to contribute more than its share to the friendship.

But the third restriction – that friends should place the same value on us as we place on ourselves – is the most destructive of all. For it's often the case that a person's spirit is too abject or his hope of bettering his situation too broken. It's the friend's job not to feel the same way, but to make an effort to lift the other person's languishing spirit and lead him to a better and more hopeful way of thinking.

Therefore, we must find some other way to circumscribe friendship – but only after I've discussed a maxim that Scipio used to denounce vehemently. He insisted there was no proverb more antithetical to friendship than the one stating that we should love a friend as if someday we will hate him. He couldn't even bring himself to believe that this was a saying of Bias,⁴¹ one of the Seven Sages, as is commonly thought. He considered it the opinion of some vile, greedy, power-crazed wretch. For how could anyone have as a friend someone he thought he could have as an enemy? Why, in that case he would have to hope and pray that his friend would do wrong as often as possible, to give him more handles to lay hold of. And he would have to grow angry, hurt and jealous at his friends' good deeds and good fortune. The effect of this precept, whatever its source, would be the total destruction of friendship! A better guideline is that in building friendships we should be careful not to start loving someone we could possibly one day come to hate. Scipio even thought that if we ended up making an unfortunate choice, we should put up with it rather than look for an opportunity to sever the relationship.

So, then, in my judgement, the extent of friendship should be as

follows: as long as the character of both friends is essentially blameless, they should share without exception all affairs, opinions and feelings. And if we happen to be called upon to support our friends' inappropriate choices, at least when civil status or reputation are at stake, we must be willing to stray from the straight and narrow, as long as no great disgrace is involved – up to this point leniency can be shown to a friend. We shouldn't underestimate the importance of reputation, or forget that the good will of fellow citizens is an important tool for getting things done, even if it would be shameful to acquire it through flattery and cajoling. Virtue, from which respect follows, is not to be underestimated.⁴²

Scipio (I come back to him often, since he was always talking about friendship) used to complain that people pay closer attention to everything else: they can tell you how many goats and sheep they have, but not how many friends; they exercise caution in acquiring the former, but are negligent in choosing the latter. They don't even have marks or signs for determining who might be fit for friendship. They should choose those who are steady, dependable and consistent – a small group, difficult to assess except through experience. And such experience only occurs in the course of the friendship – which means, in effect, that friendship outpaces judgement and negates the value of experience.

As a result, it makes sense to restrain the rush of good will, as we would a chariot-team. We only race horses that have been tested; so, too, we should find some way to test the character of friends. Some men's unreliability becomes apparent in minor financial transactions; others, who aren't affected by a small sum, reveal their true selves when a big amount is involved. And even if we locate men who consider it sordid to prefer money to friendship, where will we find those who don't place a premium on elective office, magistracies, commands, power and riches; men who won't prefer those things if they conflict with the demands of friendship? Human nature is weak when it comes to rejecting power: some people even think it will be overlooked if they acquire power at the expense of friendship, on the grounds that the friendship was neglected for an important reason.

And so it is extremely difficult to find true friendships among politicians and men of affairs. Where is the man who prefers his friend's advancement to his own? What? Even leaving this aside, consider how troublesome, how difficult it is to share in another's misfortunes. It is hard to find anyone who will lower himself this way. Although Ennius' saying is true – 'Trouble reveals the trustworthy

friend'⁴³ – still, most are convicted of weakness and unreliability on one of two counts: either they make light of a friend when their own affairs go well or they desert him when his affairs go badly. Therefore, we should value as a rare type of human being, indeed virtually a god, any man who remains reliable, consistent and steady in either situation.

What secures the stability and constancy we seek in friendship is trust. Nothing is stable if it can't be trusted. It's equally important to choose someone who is candid and sociable and emotionally compatible, that is, is affected by the same things as we are. All of these contribute to trust. For a devious and variable mind can't be trusted, and a person who doesn't share our feelings and beliefs as if by instinct is unlikely to be loyal and dependable.

Another factor that contributes to the sort of reliability I've been discussing is this: a friend shouldn't take pleasure in making accusations or in believing others who do so. Thus, what I said at the beginning turns out to be true: there can be no friendship except among good people. A good man, whom we can also call a wise man, holds to these two principles in friendship: never to lie or deceive (for it's more honest to disagree openly than to feign agreement); and always to reject charges brought against a friend by someone else, not even entertaining the suspicion that the friend has done something wrong.

On top of all this, there should be a certain mellowness in conversation and conduct, which gives friendship its special flavour. True, sternness and severity can be impressive, but friendship ought to be a little relaxed, open, pleasant and inclined towards every sort of sociability and ease.

At this point there's an issue that can seem difficult: when we have new friends, who are well worth our friendship, should we prefer them to the old, as we tend to prefer younger horses to older? But what a disgraceful consideration for a human being! We mustn't have our fill of friendships the way we do of other things. Like a wine that improves with age, the oldest friendship should be the most delightful. It's true what they say: friends must eat many pecks of salt together before they discharge their mutual debt.

Still, if new friendships promise to ripen, like grain on a shoot, they shouldn't be cut off. It's just that the old one should keep its rightful place. Time and familiarity have tremendous force. Even with horses, to return to that analogy, we'd all rather use one we're familiar with than one that's new and not broken in, as long as there's nothing to

prevent us. Familiarity matters, with inanimate objects as with animate: we enjoy places where we've spent a fair bit of time, even if they're rugged and wild.

It's especially important to treat friends of lower rank as equals. After all, it often happens that someone stands above the rest, as Scipio, we might say, stood out from our crowd. But he never acted superior to Philus or Rupilius or Mummius or any friends of lower rank. He even treated his brother Quintus Maximus⁴⁴ – a great fellow, but in no way the equal of Scipio – as his superior, since he was older, and he tried to improve the lot of all his friends through their association with him.

We should all observe his example and act accordingly. If you have an advantage in virtue or talent or fortune, share it with those closest to you. If your parents are of low birth, or your relatives are limited in energy or fortune, add to their wealth or improve their station. We sometimes see characters in plays who have been enslaved due to ignorance of their birthright. When they are recognized and found to be sons of gods or kings, they retain their affection for the shepherds whom they've regarded as parents for many years. How much more appropriate this is for our true parents! We gain the greatest benefit from our talent or virtue or other advantage when we bestow it on someone near and dear.

Those of higher rank who are bound by friendship or other close connection should make themselves equal to their inferiors, and those of lower rank should not be hurt if a friend surpasses them in talent, luck or rank. Too many lower-rank friends keep whining and complaining, especially if they think they've done some service or favour that required effort. Only a dislikeable sort of person holds his services against someone. It's up to the recipient to remember, and not up to the doer to keep reminding.

Therefore, while superiors should be deferential in friendship, they must also try to elevate those who are worse off. For some men turn friendship into an annoyance by thinking that they are being treated with disrespect – which generally only happens if they also think that they deserve to be disrespected. It's important to free them of this misconception through words and deeds.

You should give as follows to each friend: first, as much as you can provide; second, as much as the one you love and assist can handle. No matter how successful you are, you cannot lead all of your friends to the highest positions. Scipio was able to make Publius Rupilius consul, but he couldn't do the same for his own brother Lucius. And

even if you can provide whatever you wish for another, you still must consider what he can bear.

In general, we should commit to a friendship after character and lifestyle are settled and confirmed. Just because someone as a youth was fond of hunting or playing ball doesn't mean he'll stay friends with those whose company he enjoyed when they shared the same interests. By that logic, our nurses and tutors could rightly demand the greatest share of our good will due to length of acquaintance. True, we shouldn't neglect such people, but we need to think of them in a different way. Otherwise there can be no stable friendships. Differing habits accompany differing pursuits. Such differences pull friendships apart. This is why good men cannot be friends with the wicked, or the wicked with the good: there is the greatest possible difference in character and interests.

We can rightly offer yet another guideline for friendship: not even intense affection should be used to keep a friend from pursuing a significant opportunity, as too often happens. To cite another example from drama: Neoptolemus would never have been able to conquer Troy if he had listened to Lycomedes, who had reared him and who tearfully tried to prevent his departure.⁴⁵ Matters of great importance often require us to be separated from our friends. Anyone who tries to interfere because he cannot manage his own feelings is weak and indulgent by nature and for this very reason not worth having as a friend. In every matter you must consider what it is right for you to ask of a friend – and what you will permit him to ask of you.

Sometimes when we break off a friendship, damage is unavoidable (for we are talking now about common friendships, not relations among the wise). Often a friend's vices become apparent – through actions against friends or against others – and his bad reputation spreads to his friends. We must free ourselves of such friendships by slowly withdrawing from contact or, as I heard Cato put it,⁴⁶ by tugging rather than tearing apart – unless of course some terrible injustice has been done, in which case the only possible right and honourable action is an immediate and public disavowal.

But if, as is more likely, there is a gradual change of character or interests, or a certain disagreement concerning public affairs (I am speaking, as I said before, about ordinary friendships, not those of sages), we must be careful not to gain an enemy in losing a friend. Nothing is worse than going to war with someone you once shared your life with. As you know, Scipio ended his friendship with Quintus Pompeius on my account; and he became alienated from my colleague

Metellus⁴⁷ due to political disagreement. He handled both matters in a deliberate and responsible manner, giving no cause for bitterness.

So in the first place take care not to grow apart from your friends; but if you do, make it clear that your friendship just faded out and wasn't clubbed to death. Be especially careful not to let friends turn into mortal enemies: that's how lawsuits, slander and violent quarrels get started. We should tolerate even these developments, if at all possible, and pay respect to the former friendship, so that the one who causes the injury, not the one who suffers it, is to blame. In general there is only one precaution and protection against all such trouble and unpleasantness: don't give your love too quickly or to those who don't deserve it.

People who deserve friendship are people who show reason to be loved. They're a rare breed, but then everything remarkable is rare; the hardest thing to find is a perfect specimen of its type. Most people don't see the good in a relationship unless it's profitable, they pick friends the same way they pick cattle – fostering the ones they think will bring the greatest return on investment. As a result, they miss out on beautiful and natural friendship that is sought in and for itself. They have no experience of the extraordinary power of this type of friendship. For each person loves himself, not in order to make some profit from his affection, but because he is dear to himself on his own. Unless this same feeling is transferred to friendship, we will never find a true friend. For a friend is, in effect, another self.

It's obvious that even beasts – of the sky, the sea and the land, wild as well as tame – first love themselves (for this tendency is equal and innate in all animate creatures), then seek out others of the same species with whom they can associate,⁴⁸ and that they do this with a longing that resembles the human feeling of love. Among humans this natural impulse is even stronger, with each one loving himself and seeking another whose spirit can mingle with his own so as to make virtually a single being out of two.

Yet most people have a misguided, one might even say perverse, desire for a friend of the sort they cannot be. They seek from friends what they themselves do not provide. It's only fair first to be a good man, then to look for another like yourself. With such men it's possible to have the sort of stable friendship I've been discussing, and when they have been united in good will they will take control of the very desires that enslave everybody else, they will rejoice in fairness and justice, they will always be on the lookout for each other, they will never demand from each other anything wrong or dishonourable.

They will cherish, love, and even revere each other. Indeed, to take away reverence from friendship is to remove its most precious jewel.

It's a dangerous mistake, then, to think that friendship provides a licence for any sort of lust or sin.⁴⁹ Nature created friendship as an aide to virtue, not a comrade in vice, because virtue cannot achieve its highest goals in isolation, but only when joined and linked with that of another. A relationship of this sort, in the past, present or future, is the best company on the journey to the greatest good.

This, I tell you, is the kind of companionship that provides everything men regard as worth seeking: integrity, glory, tranquillity of soul and joy. When these are present, there is happiness, too; without them, it cannot exist. But because happiness is the best and greatest good, if we want to attain it we must give our attention to virtue, for without virtue we cannot acquire friendship or anything else worth seeking. Anyone who thinks he has friends yet forgets about virtue, learns his mistake when some grave difficulty forces him to put his friends to the test.

Therefore – and it can't be said often enough – you must judge before loving, not love before judging. We often pay for our negligence, and most of all in choosing and cultivating friends. We follow a confused plan of action and, in violation of the old proverb, argue a case that's been decided. Bound together by daily interaction or mutual obligation, suddenly in midstream we break off the friendship in response to some offence.

Our carelessness is all the more objectionable in a matter of such grave importance. Friendship is the one human possession that everyone agrees is useful. Even virtue is scorned by many and thought to be mere display and self-promotion. Many look down on wealth and, content with little, find their joy in meagre food and clothing. And the very honours that inflame some men with desire, many others despise, thinking nothing more trivial or inane. And everything else that somebody admires, somebody else considers worthless. But everyone – politicians, natural philosophers, people who conduct business even on holiday, and people who have dedicated themselves entirely to the pursuit of pleasure – arrives at the same opinion about friendship: namely that life is nothing without it, at least if they have any desire to live like a free person.

One way or another, friendship slips into every life, not permitting any plan of existence to do without it. Even a person so spiteful and monstrous as to shun and hate contact with human beings, like the legendary Timon of Athens,⁵⁰ can't avoid seeking someone in whose

presence he can spew his poisonous bile. This point is clear from the following hypothetical situation: let's say some god carried us away from the company of mortals and placed us in solitude somewhere or other, and there granted our every natural desire in full but took away the opportunity to see any other human being. Who would be so unfeeling as to put up with such a life? In isolation, who wouldn't lose enjoyment of all delights?

So I think what Archytas of Tarentum⁵¹ says is true, as I heard my elders repeat after they heard it from other old men:

If anyone ascends into the heavens and gazes out over the universe and the beauty of the constellations, the marvellous sight will scarcely appeal to him; but if he has someone to describe it to, then it's the most delightful thing of all!

Thus nature favours nothing solitary, but always inclines towards some kind of assistance, which the dearest friend provides in the most agreeable way.

Yet even though this same nature communicates its aims and desires through countless signs, somehow we grow deaf and fail to hear the advice we are given. Just as the advantages of friendship are many and diverse, so there are many grounds for suspicion and offence, which the wise man will ignore or make light of or just plain endure. One possible cause of offence must be dismissed if trust and benefit are to remain in a friendship: friends must often give advice and criticism, which, arising as they do from feelings of good will, must also be accepted in a spirit of friendship.

Nevertheless, what my friend Terence says in his *Andrian Girl* somehow remains true: 'Acquiescence yields friendship, truth brings forth hate.'⁵²

Truth is destructive if in fact it causes hatred, which poisons friendship. Much more destructive, however, is deference or acquiescence that indulges the sins of a friend and permits reckless behaviour. But the biggest mistake is to dismiss the truth and succumb to other people's flattery. We must exercise care and reason in every aspect of this matter in order to advise without stridency and correct without abuse. If we defer or acquiesce, to use Terence's term loosely, we should do so in an easy-going manner, and keep flattery, the enabler of vice, at a distance. It's unfit not just for a friend but for any free man. To live with a tyrant is one thing, to live with a friend quite another!

Besides, if a person's ears are closed to the truth, so much so that he can't hear it from a friend, he's a lost cause anyway. There's a clever

saying of Cato's (one of many) that goes like this:

For some men bitter enemies do a greater service than friends
who might seem sweet: the former often tell the truth, the
latter never.⁵³

And isn't it absurd that when people do receive advice, they aren't bothered by what should bother them, but they are by what shouldn't! Rather than being irked at their mistake, they take offence at the correction. They should do the opposite: regret the error, be happy for the advice.

Giving and taking criticism is the mark of a true friendship – giving cheerfully, not harshly, and accepting patiently, not reluctantly. This being the case, we can agree that there's nothing more destructive of friendship than flattery, sweet-talk or constant affirmation. The same vice goes by many names: it's what we expect of unreliable people who will say anything they think we want to hear – except the truth.

Hypocrisy is a vice under any circumstance because it blurs our capacity to assess what's real. It's especially at odds with friendship as it destroys the truth, without which friendship is meaningless. For the power of friendship derives from the fact that several souls become, in effect, one. How can this transformation take place if we can't be sure that one of the souls is unified and constant on its own, but is instead shifting, variable and divided? After all, is there anything as pliant or devious as the mind of someone who adapts not just his judgement and will to those of another, but even his facial expression and nod of the head!

He says no, so do I. He says yes, I do too. In short, I told
myself: Just agree with everything!⁵⁴

That's Terence again, in the character of Gnatho. To offer friendship of such a sort is a complete joke. And yet there are many just like Gnatho, only higher in rank, fortune and reputation. Flattery on their part is harmful because they lend their authority to the falsehood.

Still, it's possible, by paying careful attention, to distinguish the flatterer from the true friend, just as we can tell any kind of fake or cover-up from what's genuine and undoctored. Even though public assemblies are full of men without any real experience, they still tend to distinguish correctly between a demagogue, that is, an unreliable citizen who will say anything, and a steady, rigorous and responsible person.

What promises Gaius Papirius poured into the ears of the assembly recently, when he spoke in favour of the law on re-electing tribunes!⁵⁵

I argued against it, but I'd rather not talk about myself and will instead speak more freely about Scipio. Good heavens! What authority, what majesty in his oration! You might say he was the general of the Roman people, not their comrade. (But the two of you were there, and the written speech is available.) And so a so-called 'popular law' was rejected by a vote of the people!⁵⁶

Also (to come back to myself), you remember how popular Licinius Crassus' bill about the priesthoods seemed to be, back in the consulship of Lucius Mancinus and Scipio's brother, Quintus Maximus.⁵⁷ It would have made membership in the priestly colleges a gift to be dispensed by the assembly. (And by the way, Crassus was the first to turn towards the people gathered in the Forum while making a speech.⁵⁸) Nevertheless, when I argued against it, respect for the immortal gods easily prevailed over Crassus' sales-pitch. And this happened when I was praetor, five years before my election as consul: the argument succeeded on its merits, and not due to any great prestige on my part.

If the truth – once it's brought into the light of day – prevails even against political theatrics, with all their lying and deceit, what's to be expected in the case of friendship, which depends entirely on truth? In friendship, unless you see an open heart, as the saying goes, and reveal your own, you'll find nothing certain or sure, not even the feeling of loving and being loved, since you won't know whether it's authentic. Still, whatever the danger of flattery, it's only harmful to the person who welcomes and enjoys it. And so it happens that the person who flatters and takes most delight in himself, also opens his ears most readily to other flatterers.

Of course, virtue also loves itself. For it knows itself best and knows how loveable it is. Still, I am talking not about virtue but about an illusion of virtue. For fewer possess virtue than like to think they do. The latter enjoy flattery, and when someone falsifies what he says to suit their whim, they think the bogus speech is a legal affidavit attesting their true merits. It's not friendship at all when one party is unwilling to hear the truth and the other is only too ready to tell a lie. Without braggart soldiers, there'd be no witty flattery of parasites in comedies onstage. 'Does Thais really send me great thanks?'⁵⁹ It would be enough to answer, 'Great thanks, indeed,' but he says 'Enormous.' The yes-man amplifies anything his target would like to think is big.

Therefore, although this kind of empty flattery is most effective on people who enjoy and welcome it, we still need to advise even serious and dependable men to be careful not to be caught out by a deceptive

sort of compliance. Only a total fool fails to recognize the obvious toady. But special caution is required to keep a clever schemer from sidling up alongside. He's not easy to recognize, for he often flatters by disagreeing, or charms by seeming to take issue, until at last he surrenders and pretends to be defeated. This is how he gets his mark to imagine that he's actually seeing things more clearly himself. What could be more disgraceful than being tricked this way? So take care that it doesn't happen!

You've made me the biggest dupe of any comic geezer,
And played me for a fool most craftily.⁶⁰

Even onstage the most ridiculous character is that of the witless and gullible old man.

Yet somehow I've strayed to insignificant instances of friendship, instead of friendships between accomplished men, men of wisdom – by which I mean wisdom as it's possible for humans. Let's get back to my opening topic and bring this conversation to an end at last!

It's virtue, virtue above all, Fannius and Mucius, that creates and preserves friendships. Virtue is the source of compatibility, reliability, consistency. When virtue advances, extending its torch, and sees and recognizes itself in someone else, it moves in that direction and receives in exchange what it finds in the other. From this encounter either love or friendship (both words come from 'love'⁶¹) blazes forth. But to love means nothing other than to cherish the one you love without pursuing your needs or your advantage. The latter blossoms in friendship anyway, just like a flower, even though you didn't seek it.

When we were young we felt good will of this sort towards our elders, men like Lucius Paullus, Marcus Cato, Gaius Galus, Publius Nasica and Tiberius Gracchus,⁶² the father-in-law of our Scipio. And although good will shines more brightly among men of the same age, for example Scipio and me, Lucius Furius, Publius Rupilius and Spurius Mummius, we in turn, now that we are old, yield to the affection of younger men, such as the two of you or Quintus Tubero.⁶³ I even enjoy my relationship with Publius Rutilius and Aulus Verginius, who are younger still. The natural order of life has been so arranged that one generation succeeds another; thus it's really most desirable to reach the finish line, so to speak, together with those who accompanied us at the starting gate.

Yet because human affairs are frail and fleeting, we need to be always on the lookout for people to love and be loved by. If life is

deprived of affection and good will, all pleasure vanishes too. Yes, Scipio was snatched away unexpectedly. But for me he lives on, and will live forever. His virtue was what I loved, and it has not been extinguished. Although I was the one who had it always within reach, it doesn't appear before my eyes only, but will remain bright and shining through the generations. No one will ever undertake great deeds in hopeful spirit without thinking it necessary to place before himself the memory and image of that man.

Without doubt of all the benefits that fortune and nature have granted to me, there is none I can compare to my friendship with Scipio. In it I found common purpose in public affairs, advice on private matters, relaxation filled with delight. As far as I know I never offended him, even in the slightest matter, and I never heard from him anything I'd rather not have. We had one household and one way of living, which we shared not just during military service, but also on travels abroad and joint retreats to the countryside.

Why even mention our mutual intellectual pursuits, the teaching and learning that occupied our leisure, far from the prying of the crowd? If such memories had died with Scipio, there's no way I could stand my longing for a man who was so close to me, whom I loved so much. But far from dying, what we shared becomes stronger and more powerful when I reflect and remember. And even if I lose these capacities, well, old age brings its own great comfort: I can't have long to put up with missing him. Anything brief, no matter how difficult, ought to be tolerable.

This is all I have to say on the topic of friendship. As for you, I urge you to strive for virtue, without which friendship is impossible, and to recognize that other than virtue, nothing is preferable to friendship.

On Duties, or Life in Accordance With Human Nature

On Duties, Book 1 (Entire)

Like the treatise On Friendship, the three books of On Duties were composed in the autumn of 44 BCE. In them Cicero speaks in his own person and addresses his son Marcus, who is studying in Athens. The work considers the explicitly Stoic theme of fitting or appropriate actions, asking how we are to live in relationship to the external goods of the world. According to Cicero, all such actions can be grouped under the headings of the search for knowledge, the defence of justice, moderation in word and deed, and magnanimity or greatness of soul. Questions that we might consider as central to an ethical code, such as sexual conduct or professional ethics, are treated only incidentally, subsumed into the broader topics of moderation and justice, respectively. By the same token, issues rarely addressed in contemporary ethics, such as the need to distinguish oneself (here part of magnanimity, or greatness of soul), or the role of decorum as an aspect of moderation, receive extensive discussion. The work is as much a treatise on human nature, asking how we are made and why we do what we do, as it is a handbook of morals, telling us how to behave. In Books 2 and 3 of On Duties Cicero will consider the relationship between integrity and advantage in human life. Here in Book 1, translated in its entirety, he provides a general framework for approaching ethical deliberation. As in all of Cicero's writings, that framework is understood to be the natural order of the universe, which links the individual to the community and the world, and makes broad demands on our sense of responsibility.

To my dear son Marcus:¹

Now that you've spent a year listening to Cratippus (in Athens at that!), you must be well stocked with philosophical precepts and guidelines, thanks to the great authority of a teacher and a city that can supply you with theoretical knowledge and practical examples respectively. Still, I've always found it helpful to use both Latin and Greek, in philosophy as well as rhetorical exercise, and I'd advise you

to do the same in order to develop equal competence in both languages. To that end, I believe I've done our countrymen a real service: those who read Greek in the original – as well as those who don't – believe that they've gained something useful for both public speaking and personal moral deliberation. You're trying to achieve the same ends by studying with the leading philosopher of this generation – which you will keep doing as long as you want to. And you should want to, just as long as your progress doesn't disappoint you. But when you read my works – which are largely in agreement with the Peripatetics, since we both like to be thought of as followers of Socrates and Plato – I won't stop you from forming your own judgement of the content, although this much is for certain: you'll enrich your Latin style by reading what I've written. Please don't take this as a boast. I concede philosophical knowledge to many, but in claiming an orator's special competence in speaking clearly, cogently and eloquently, I think I'm acting within my rights. After all, I've devoted a lifetime to this endeavour.

And so, Marcus, I strongly encourage you to study both my speeches and my philosophical treatises, which are almost as numerous.² The speeches are more forceful, but a mild and restrained style is worth developing as well. No Greek I'm aware of has managed to make equal effort or achieve equal success in both courtroom advocacy and the calm type of discussion you'll find here – unless perhaps you count Demetrius of Phalerum. He was a subtle debater, a less than energetic speaker, pleasant enough, though, so you could tell he was a student of Theophrastus.³ As to my success in the two genres, I'll let others pass judgement. It goes without saying that I've made the effort.

Of course I recognize that Plato, too, if he had wanted to argue cases in court, could have spoken in a rich and dignified style, and if Demosthenes⁴ had remembered what he learned from Plato and chosen to put it into practice, he could have done so with glittering elegance. The same goes for Aristotle and Isocrates,⁵ in my opinion, although each despised the other's efforts while taking great pleasure in his own.

At any rate, once I had decided to write to you – a little now, more later – I made it my goal to compose something equally appropriate to your age and my status. Philosophers have discussed many serious and important topics carefully and at length, but their teachings and guidelines about duties seem especially expansive. For there's no aspect of life – public, private, judicial, domestic, personal or involving others – to which duty, or responsibility,⁶ is irrelevant. All

that's honourable in life comes from observing duty, and all that's shameful from neglecting it.

As a matter of fact, duty is a standard topic of inquiry for all philosophers. Is there anyone so brazen as to call himself a philosopher who doesn't offer guidelines on appropriate action? True, there are several schools of thought that undermine any sense of duty with their claims concerning the ultimate in good and evil. For anyone who defines the greatest good without reference to virtue, but makes it depend entirely on personal advantage, isn't using moral integrity as a guide. If he's true to his convictions and doesn't at least occasionally succumb to natural decency, then he can't practise friendship or justice or generosity. It's just not possible for a brave man to consider pain the greatest evil or a moderate person to declare that pleasure is the greatest good.

All of this is straightforward enough that it doesn't require demonstration, although I have discussed the matter elsewhere.⁷ A philosophical system that aims at consistency is incapable of making any claims regarding duty or transmitting stable, reliable guidelines grounded in nature, unless it specifies moral integrity as the only, or primary, goal to be pursued – and for its own sake. Instruction on this topic thus belongs exclusively to Stoics, Academics and Peripatetics, since the views of Aristo, Pyrrho and Herillus⁸ have stood refuted for quite some time. Yet even the latter group would have the right to contribute to a discussion of duty if they allowed for the setting of preferences, which would open the way to a consideration of moral action. In the present discussion I'll chiefly follow the Stoics, treating them not as spokesmen for the truth, but, in my usual manner, as a resource to be drawn on in accordance with my own judgement and discernment.

Because all of my discussion will concern duty, it makes sense to start by defining the term – which Panaetius, surprisingly enough, failed to do.⁹ Any methodical presentation of a topic ought to begin with a definition, so that there's a clear understanding of what's being discussed. All investigation of duty falls into one of two categories. One type deals with the ultimate good, the other takes the form of guidelines for conducting all aspects of life. Examples of the first include: are all duties complete? is one duty more important than another? and so forth. The duties for which guidelines are transmitted also pertain to the ultimate good, but in a less obvious way, since they have more to do with the ordering of everyday life: these are the duties to be discussed in this treatise.

Another way of differentiating duties is between so-called middle and perfect duty. We can call perfect duty correct duty, since the Greek is *katorthoma* (meaning 'straight' or 'correct'); common duty they call *kathekon* ('appropriate', 'suitable'). And thus they define what is correct as a perfect duty; but they say a middle duty is one for which a plausible justification of its performance can be provided.¹⁰

According to Panaetius, there are thus three stages in Stoic deliberation about a possible course of action. First they ask whether the action under consideration is honourable or shameful, often evaluating opposing viewpoints. Then they inquire and investigate whether or not it's conducive to the proper use and enjoyment of life, or if it enhances resources, wealth and power so as to benefit oneself and one's associates – a category of deliberation that falls entirely under the heading of Advantage. A third type of uncertainty arises when an apparent benefit or advantage seems to conflict with what's honourable. Advantage drags in one direction, honour or integrity seems to beckon in another and deliberation pulls the mind two ways, creating an anxious ambivalence.

Ignoring an issue is a major blunder when you're drawing up an outline, and this outline ignores two. For it is common not only to question whether something is honourable or shameful, but also to ask which of two honourable proposals is more honourable, and which of two advantageous proposals is more advantageous. So Panaetius' three-part process turns out to require five parts. The first considers what's honourable, but in two phases; then what's useful, also in two phases; finally there's the need for a comparative evaluation.

From the beginning, nature has ordained that every type of living creature defends its life and body, avoids anything that seems likely to cause harm and looks to secure the necessities of life, such as food, a hiding-place and other things of this sort. Eagerness to mate for the sake of reproduction is also common to all living creatures, as is care, of whatever sort, for offspring. The biggest difference between humans and animals, however, is that the latter, to the extent that they are prompted by their senses, are responding only to what is right in front of them in the present, having little if any awareness of past or future. Human beings, on the other hand, because they have a share of reason through which they discern interconnections, recognize causation and don't neglect what comes before and after. They compare likenesses, joining and linking future affairs to the present; they easily recognize the progression of life as a whole and prepare what's necessary for living it.

The same nature, through the lively force of reason, accommodates human beings to one another and to joint participation in language and life, instils a special affection for offspring and urges creation of and participation in gatherings and assemblies; for these reasons it also urges men to be eager to provide for the care and feeding not just of themselves but also of their spouses, children and everyone else they hold dear and are obliged to look after. This kind of concern rouses the soul, making it more capable of getting things done.

A salient characteristic of humankind is our quest for truth. When we are free from necessary care and labour, we long to see, hear, and learn, and we regard knowledge of hidden and marvellous matters as essential to a happy life. From this we understand that what is true, simple and uncorrupted is best suited to human nature. In addition to our longing to see the truth, there's a certain desire for primacy, which explains why a soul well formed by nature will not defer to anyone except guides, teachers and those who give orders justly, legitimately and for the general advantage. All of which accounts for greatness of soul and disdain for human affairs.

It's no small expression of the power of nature and reason that we alone among animate beings sense order, grace and measure in words and deeds. In the case of visual perception, no other animal recognizes beauty, charm and the interrelationship of parts. Carrying the analogy from eyes to soul, nature and reason consider it all the more important to preserve beauty, consistency and order in thought and deed. They are on their guard against ugly and effeminate behaviour, and against any and every lustful thought or action. From these qualities, honourable conduct, which is our goal, is forged and fashioned. Even if it doesn't characterize the aristocracy, it's still honourable, just as our truthful discussion, even if no one praises it, earns the praise of nature.

Marcus, my son, you see the form and outward appearance of honour and goodness – which, as Plato says, 'once sensed by the eyes, excite an amazing love of wisdom'.¹¹ But each instance of honourable conduct falls into one of four categories: it entails perception and discernment of the truth; or safeguarding bonds among humans, by assigning to each his own and securing relations of trust; or it originates in the magnificent strength of a lofty, unconquered soul; or in temperate, moderate order and measure in word and deed. Although these four categories are connected and overlapping, specific types of duty are associated with each.

For example, in the one listed first – where we place wisdom and

foresight – investigation of the truth also belongs and, as a virtue, constitutes the corresponding obligation. For whoever best perceives the truth of a given matter and provides the swiftest and most acute explanation is generally regarded as wisest and most insightful. Thus the raw material of this virtue, what it handles and treats, is truth.

The remaining three virtues involve necessities, specifically the provision and protection of the means of life. Thanks to them, human social order is preserved, and excellence and greatness of soul have an opportunity to shine – by supplying and increasing wealth and advantage for oneself and one's people, and, even more so, by despising these very things. Order, constancy, moderation and similar qualities pertain to situations that involve some physical action, and not just mental activity. In bringing a certain measure and order to the affairs of life, we will preserve what's good and beautiful.

Of the four topics into which we've divided the nature and significance of the honourable, the first – which consists of discovery of the truth – most strongly engages our nature as human beings. All of us are drawn and led to a desire for knowledge and understanding. We consider it beautiful to excel in this area, wicked and shameful to stumble, go astray, be ignorant or deceived. In this undertaking, which is both natural and honourable, two errors are to be avoided. First, we must not take what is unknown as known and rashly assent to it.¹² Anyone who wants to avoid this mistake, as all should, will devote time and effort to careful observation.

The second mistake occurs when people apply too much energy and enthusiasm to obscure and difficult issues that are not really essential. Provided these errors have been avoided, we can rightly approve the devotion of time and energy to subjects that are honourable and worth knowing. We're told this is the case with Gaius Sulpicius' interest in astrology, and I know it's so with Sextus Pompeius¹³ and geometry, with many who study dialectic, with even more who study civil law. These disciplines all entail investigation of the truth, and being distracted from pursuing them by pressing affairs is contrary to duty. True, virtue warrants praise to the extent that it's active; yet there's often an interruption in action, and multiple returns follow from study. Then, too, mental activity, which never ceases, can involve us in the acquisition of knowledge without conscious effort on our part. Still, all such thought and mental engagement is to be devoted either to making plans about what's honourable and relates to living happily and well, or to the pursuit of knowledge and understanding. So much for the first source of duty.

As for the remaining three, the one demanding broadest treatment concerns the maintenance of social order and communal life among men. It has two parts: justice, which provides virtue's greatest splendour and is the basis for men's identification as good; and, joined to it, generosity, which can also be called kindness or liberality. The first responsibility of justice is not to harm anyone else unless you've received a prior injury; the second, that common goods are to be used for the common benefit and private goods used privately.

To be sure, nothing is private by nature; rather, it becomes so by long occupation, for example when people come upon a vacant land; or by victory, as when someone has prevailed in war; or by law, pact, contract or lot: so it happens that the *ager Arpinas* is set aside for the *Arpinates*, the *ager Tusculanus*¹⁴ for the Tusculans, with a comparable assignment of private holdings. Thus, because everyone's property was previously common by nature, let each retain his own allotment. Anyone else who tries to take it disturbs the proper order of human society.

Nonetheless, as an excellent remark of Plato¹⁵ would have it, we aren't born only for ourselves: our country and our friends have a claim on a portion of our existence. And as the Stoics insist, although the earth's abundance was created for the benefit of people, people are born for the sake of people, to be able to benefit one another. We must follow nature in this regard and give priority to shared well-being, and through the exchange of duties, by giving and receiving skills, efforts and abilities, create social bonds among humans.

Moreover, the foundation of justice is trust, in other words consistency and truthfulness in declarations and compacts. Although it may strike some as a little crude, let's go ahead and copy the Stoics in their enthusiasm for etymologies, taking it on faith that the word 'trust' applies to what 'truly happens'.¹⁶

As for injustice, there are two types, one committed by a person who causes harm, the other by a person who does not prevent injury to a victim, although he could have. To make an unjust assault on someone, whether incited by anger or some other disturbance, is like doing violence to a companion. And failing to block or ward off an injury when it's possible to do so is as wrong as abandoning parents, friends, or country.

Injustices committed with the specific intent of causing harm often originate in fear: one person plans to hurt another out of fear of suffering a loss if he doesn't take action. But the primary reason people commit injustice is to obtain something they desire: greed is

often manifest in such cases. Wealth is sought either for the necessities of life or for the enjoyment of pleasures. People more inclined to the latter desire money in order to accumulate the means of gratifying themselves. As Marcus Crassus recently put it, for a man who wants to be at the head of the state no fortune is big enough unless the interest it generates can feed an army.¹⁷ Conspicuous consumption and extravagant elegance bring such a thrill that the desire to acquire money for their sake knows no end. Which isn't to say that there's anything objectionable in a harmless increase in the family estate: but wrongdoing must always be avoided.

Many people come to forget all about justice once they start longing for military commands, political offices, or glory. As Ennius says:

No sacred bond,
No trust exists in a kingdom.¹⁸

For whenever it's impossible for the majority to excel, competition becomes so intense that it's extremely difficult to maintain the sacred bond of social order. The brash behaviour of Gaius Caesar made this point clear as he overturned all divine and human ordinances for the sake of the pre-eminent role he had – through an error of judgement – fashioned for himself.¹⁹ There's a particular danger here insofar as desire for leadership, power and glory is often evident in men of the greatest spirit and most remarkable talent. All the more reason to take care not to commit an offence of this sort.

But in every instance of injustice it makes a big difference whether the wrongdoing is caused by a mental disturbance that's brief and of the moment, or is the result of deliberation and careful planning. Actions caused by a sudden passion are less blameworthy than those undertaken through premeditation.

So much for the topic of causing injury. As for shirking our responsibility to protect others, there are many common causes. People prefer not to take on enemies, labour, or expense; they hold back due to lack of concern or laziness or reluctance, they become so entangled in their own interests and affairs that they leave unguarded the very people they should be protecting.

As a result, we need to recognize that being devoted to the quest for truth, scorning and counting as nothing the things the majority pursue with passion and often come to blows over (which is how Plato depicts philosophers²⁰), is not enough also to make a person just. For while they pursue one version of justice by trying not to harm or injure anyone, they stumble into its opposite. Impeded by their own

desire to learn, they abandon those they should be protecting. And so Plato thinks they will not enter public life unless forced. But it would be better if they did so by choice: for right action is just to the extent that it's voluntary.

There are even those who say that they are merely minding their own business, whether out of concern for their family's wealth or from a general distaste for human interaction. And, indeed, they don't seem to do anyone any harm. But in escaping one kind of injustice they run right into another, in that they abandon the social aspect of life, giving it no attention, effort or assistance.

Now that we've described the two types of injustice and explained the causes of each, having previously established the constituents of justice, we could easily determine our duty on any given occasion, if only we didn't love ourselves so much! For it's difficult to get involved in others' business.

True, Terence's Chremes thinks 'everything human is my business, too'.²¹ Nevertheless, we observe more closely and feel more deeply things that go well or badly for ourselves, as opposed to those that affect others, which we observe as if from a great distance. As a result, we judge differently about the latter than we do about ourselves. Those who say not to act, if in doubt about an action's fairness, give good advice. Fairness is self-evident; hesitation signals contemplation of injustice.

Still, situations often occur in which an action that otherwise seems to suit a fair-minded person or the one we call a 'decent fellow'²² – for example to return a deposit, to keep a promise and other matters of truth or trust – is changed into its opposite. Sometimes neglecting or violating these rules turns out to be the just thing to do. For it is appropriate to refer to the basic elements of justice I described at the outset: first, not to harm anyone; second, to be of service to the common good. When circumstances bring about a change in these elements, duty changes accordingly; it does not remain identical in every instance.

For example, it might become disadvantageous to fulfil a promise or contract, either for the one who was promised or for the one who promised. To take an instance from drama: if Neptune had not kept his promise to Theseus, Theseus would not have lost his son Hippolytus. Of the three wishes he was granted, according to the story, it was the third, his angry prayer for the death of Hippolytus, whose fulfilment brought the greatest grief.²³

In other words, there's no need to keep promises that are

disadvantageous to the one to whom you made the promise. And if keeping the promise harms you more than it benefits the other party, it doesn't violate duty to make a relative evaluation. For example, if you agree to come to someone's trial as an advocate, but in the meantime your son becomes gravely ill, it wouldn't be contrary to duty not to do what you said you would; the person to whom you made the promise would be more derelict in his duty if he complained of being abandoned. Who fails to see that there's no need for a person who's been coerced by fear or duped by treachery to keep his promises? Indeed, most such obligations have been lifted by praetors' decrees, some even by laws.²⁴

Injuries often come about through trickery of some sort or through malicious, overly clever interpretation of the law. This is the source of the expression: The greater the right, the greater the potential for wrong. Even in public affairs there is often wrongdoing of this sort, for example, when someone lays waste to enemy fields by night, despite a thirty-day truce, on the grounds that the truce specifies 'days' not 'nights'.

Not even our people escape this charge, if it's true that Quintus Fabius Labeo (or maybe someone else – for I only have it by hearsay), when delegated by the Senate to arbitrate a boundary dispute between Nola and Naples,²⁵ went to the trouble spot, spoke to each side separately and urged them not to be greedy or acquisitive, but to back off from the line of dispute rather than move across it. When both parties did as he asked, a fair bit of land was left between them. So he set the boundaries where the two sides had agreed, and assigned the remainder in the middle to the Roman people! This is deceit, not arbitration. Scheming of this sort should always be avoided.

Indeed, there are even obligations to be met towards those who have wronged us. Punishment and vengeance have a limit. I'm inclined to think it's enough if the wrongdoer is made to regret the harm he's caused so that he won't act this way again and others will be more reluctant to cause harm. In matters of state, it's especially important to respect the rules of war. Granted, of the two means of resolving conflict, discussion and force, the first is appropriate to humans, the second to wild beasts; still, it's necessary to resort to the one if it's not possible to use the other.

As a consequence, wars will be started for the purpose of living in peace unmolested. Once victory has been attained, enemies who were not cruel or savage in battle deserve to be left unharmed, as our ancestors left them when they received into citizenship the Tuscans,

Aequi, Volscians, Sabines and Hernici – although they utterly destroyed Carthage and Numantia.²⁶

I wish they hadn't done the same to Corinth,²⁷ but I think their target was the convenience of the site: they didn't want the advantages of the site to incite conflict on some future occasion. In my view, it's always right to plan for a kind of peace that will allow no treachery or ambush. If only we had observed this principle, we would have, if not a perfect republic, at least a republic, where now there is none.²⁸ In addition, there must be consideration for those you conquer by force as well as those who drop their weapons and seek refuge with the commanders, even though the battering-ram assaults their city wall. In this matter, we Romans have acted with such a strong sense of justice that our leaders, upon accepting the surrender of cities or tribes they defeated in war, by ancestral custom became their patrons.

Indeed, fair play in war is subject to the ritual prescriptions of the fetial law of the Roman people. This law establishes that a war is not just unless it is conducted after redress has been sought or war has first been declared and announced.²⁹ Popilius was the general in charge of the province where Cato's son was serving in the army as a new recruit. When Popilius decided to discharge one legion, he also discharged Cato's son,³⁰ who was serving in it. Although Cato had stayed with the army out of a love of combat, he still wrote to Popilius to explain that if he allowed him to remain in service, he would have to swear him in a second time, since the cancellation of his earlier oath meant it was no longer legitimate for him to enter combat with the enemy. That's how punctilious he was about waging war. There's even a letter from the elder Marcus Cato to his son Marcus in which he writes that he's heard that Marcus was discharged by the consul while stationed in Macedon during the war with Perseus.³¹ He warns his son not to enter battle, saying it goes against justice for someone who is not a soldier to join combat with the enemy. I take particular note of the fact that he downplays the difficulty of the situation by softening his language, referring to the man rightly called 'enemy combatant' as 'outsider', a term our ancestors used for any foreigner. As the Twelve Tables³² attest, 'a date set with an outsider' and again 'an outsider always carries the burden of proof'. How much more civilized can you get than to use such a weak term for the person you're fighting in war (although, over time, the word has developed a negative connotation, no longer meaning 'foreigner' but applying more specifically to an enemy combatant)?

When there's a struggle for empire, and war becomes a venue for

acquiring glory, the same criteria must be met as I listed earlier in discussing legitimate grounds for war. But we should be less fierce when waging war for the glory of empire. We compete differently with a fellow citizen depending on whether he's a bitter enemy or just a rival: in the one instance we fight for our civil and legal existence, in the latter for honour and prestige.³³ Just so, with the Celtiberians and Cimbri we fought as with deadly internal enemies, for survival rather than domination, while with the Latins, Sabines, Samnites, Carthaginians, and Pyrrhus³⁴ the struggle was for domination. The Carthaginians were treaty-breakers, and Hannibal was proverbially cruel, but the rest were more just. In the famous words of Pyrrhus, on the subject of exchange of captives:

I demand no gold and expect no ransom.
We're warriors not merchants –
Let neither side trade life for money.
With courage we'll determine
Which of us is to rule – or whatever else Luck prefers.
This is my oath to you:
I will spare the freedom of all
Whose courage is spared by the fortune of war.
Consider them a gift that I bestow with the will of the gods.

A kingly speech, worthy of a descendant of Aeacus!³⁵

Even individuals constrained by circumstances to make promises to an enemy are obliged to keep them. This is how Regulus acted when he was captured by the Carthaginians in the First Punic War. He was sent to Rome to discuss an exchange of prisoners, having sworn an oath to return. As soon as he got to Rome he advised the Senate against releasing the prisoners, and then, despite efforts by family and friends to hold him back, chose to return to face execution rather than break a promise to the enemy.³⁶

During the Second Punic War, after the battle of Cannae,³⁷ Hannibal sent ten men to Rome. They were bound by oath to return if they failed to secure the release of prisoners. The censors kept all of them in jail as long as they lived, on the grounds that they had committed perjury. They even jailed one of them who, after leaving camp with Hannibal's permission, soon returned on the pretext of having forgotten something. Leaving the enemy camp a second time, he believed he had kept his promise – which he had in words, but not in reality. What matters with any oath is what you mean, not what you say. But the greatest example of justice towards an enemy on the part of our ancestors took place when a deserter from Pyrrhus promised

the Senate that he would kill the king by giving him poison. The Senate, together with Gaius Fabricius,³⁸ handed him over to Pyrrhus!

Enough on the topic of duties in wartime. Let us next recall that justice is owed even to people of the lowest rank. The lowest rank and fortune being that of slaves, there's a good guideline for their treatment in the recommendation that, just as with mercenaries, we should take work and give fair treatment. Of the two sources of injury, force and fraud, fraud is fit for foxes, force for lions, and neither is at all suited to human beings. Yet fraud deserves greater contempt. There's nothing deadlier than the behaviour of people who act as though they are honourable men, even as they commit acts of great deception. Enough said about justice.

We must next consider kindness and generosity. Nothing is better suited to human nature, yet there are many grounds for caution. We first need to make sure that our kindness doesn't hurt the intended beneficiaries – or anyone else; second, that our generosity doesn't over-extend our resources; third, that it suits the status of the recipient – which is a principle of justice to which all instances must be referred. People who do favours, if they thereby put the intended beneficiary at a disadvantage, don't deserve to be thought of as kind or generous: on the contrary, they are dangerous flatterers.³⁹ And those who harm some people in order to be generous to others commit the same kind of injustice as those who transfer someone else's property to their own account. Moreover, there are many people whose eagerness for glory and renown leads them to steal property from some to give it away to others. They think they'll be seen as generous in the eyes of their friends, as long as they make them rich by whatever means. Nothing could be more in violation of duty. We must see to it that we practise a type of generosity that helps our friends and harms no one. Sulla's and Caesar's transfer of money⁴⁰ from rightful owners to others must not be considered a generous act. No act is generous if it isn't also just.

Another precaution is to make sure your generosity does not exceed your resources. Those who try to be more generous than their situation allows are in the wrong: they hurt their dependants by transferring to outsiders resources that should be used for their assistance or handed down to them; moreover, 'generosity' of this sort often entails a desire to seize property, even illegally, in order to make a show of giving it away. It's also evident that many people are generous not by nature but out of a desire for glory. They do much to appear generous, but their motive is self-promotion rather than good

will. Their false behaviour is closer to deception than it is to generosity or goodness.

The third issue when it comes to being generous is attention to the recipient's status. The character of the intended beneficiary must be considered, his attitude towards us, his involvement with the community and his prior performance of duties to our advantage. If they all make a claim on us, it's a good choice. If not, other, better causes will carry more weight. At the same time, since we don't live among the perfect and the wise, but with creatures who conduct themselves admirably if they show even a semblance of virtue, I think it can be acknowledged that we shouldn't overlook any person who gives some indication of goodness. We should be all the more attentive if a person is equipped with the gentler virtues, such as modesty, temperance and especially justice, which we've been discussing at length. For a bold and grand temperament, when found in someone who is neither perfect nor wise, is often too intense. Those milder virtues better suit a 'good man'.

So much for conduct. As for a person's good will towards us, our first obligation is to allot the most to those who cherish us the most; yet we should evaluate their good will not, as adolescents do, on the basis of the intensity of their affection, but by considering their stability and dependability. At the same time, if they've done us a favour so that it's a question of returning, not initiating, a kindness, then we need to take particular care: no duty is more compelling than that of reciprocating an act of kindness.

But what of Hesiod's command⁴¹ to return in greater measure, if you can, anything you have accepted for your use? What should we do when challenged by an act of kindness? Are we to be like fertile fields that give back much more than they receive? And if we don't hesitate to impose obligations on those we hope will benefit us in the future, how should we act towards those who have already been of benefit? In effect, there are two sorts of generosity, giving and reciprocating. Whether we give or not is up to us, but it's not permissible for a good man to fail to reciprocate, as long as he can do so without causing harm. We need to rank the benefits we've received, since there's no doubt that the greatest obligation is to the one who's given the most. Yet it's also important to consider the donor's frame of mind, intent and good will. Many people do many things rashly and without deliberation. They might be incited by passionate concern with everyone, or by a mental impulse that rushes like a sudden gust of wind. Benefits of this sort aren't to be valued as highly as those

conferred deliberately and after careful consideration. The bonds of human society will best be maintained if the degree of generosity matches the closeness of the relationship.

It's worth inquiring more deeply as to the natural basis of human society and community. For we observe a sociability among the whole human species, which is united by use of reason and language. Teaching, learning, sharing, debating and judging attach people to one another, joining them in a kind of natural association. Nothing distinguishes us more from the nature of wild animals. We ascribe courage to them, for example to horses or lions, but never justice, fairness or goodness, because animals have no knowledge of reason or language. Human sociability is readily available for all and with all. Thus we must preserve common access to everything nature has produced for the common advantage of humankind. Allotments in accordance with law and civil regulation should be maintained as established by them, but all else is to be treated in accordance with the Greek proverb, 'Friends share everything.'⁴²

We can see what's meant by 'Friends share everything' from an example given by Ennius that's applicable to many situations:

A person who cheerfully shows the way to a wanderer
Lights his light from his own torch.
It shines no less for him though he lit another.⁴³

From this one situation he teaches that anything that can be supplied without loss should be made available even to a stranger.

Thus we have the following practices concerning common possessions: not denying access to flowing water; letting fire be lit from fire; and giving sincere advice to someone who is making a decision, provided he wants it. All of which are helpful to the recipient, and not harmful to the giver. Therefore we can take advantage of these practices, but we should always contribute something as well to the common good.

Still, since the resources of individuals are small, whereas the number having need of them is boundless, everyday generosity, following the Ennian phrase 'it shines no less for him', has a limit in our capacity to be generous to our own associates. What's more, there are many degrees of association among human beings. Apart from the infinite multitude mentioned above, closer ties of clan, tribe and language unite us. More intimate still is membership in the same political community, since citizens hold much in common, such as Forum, temples, porticoes, roads, regulations, laws, voting assemblies,

not to mention customs, social connections and business arrangements. The social bond among relatives is especially tight, creating a small circle within the measureless society of the human race.

Inasmuch as animate beings share a natural desire to procreate, the first association is marriage, which comes to include children and a single household, with everything in common. This in turn is the basis of the city and seed-bed – to speak metaphorically – of the state. Next come bonds with brothers, then with cousins, whether from aunts or uncles, who, since they can't fit into a single household, leave for other homes, as if going off to found a colony. Then there are rights of intermarriage and alliances among in-laws, which generate additional relations. This kind of branching and propagating is the origin of republics. Moreover, the closeness and good will associated with blood kinship create affectionate bonds among people. For it matters a great deal that we share ancestral monuments, religious rituals and burial grounds.

But of all human associations none is more remarkable or more secure than the friendship formed by good men who have similar modes of life. The goodness or integrity I often describe, if we actually observe it in others, inspires us and makes us friendly towards those who seem to possess it. And although every virtue is attractive and leads us to cherish its possessors, justice and generosity especially prompt this reaction. Moreover, nothing is more lovable, more binding, than shared good morals. People who have the same pursuits and preferences come to derive as much joy from each other as from themselves. As Pythagoras⁴⁴ says of friendship, one person is formed from several. The sense of community generated by free exchange of kindnesses is indeed great. As long as they are welcome and mutual, such benefits create a steadfast bond between those who share them.

When you make a complete mental inventory of all associations, none is more important or more precious than the bond joining each of us to the state. Parents are dear, children are dear, so are relatives and friends; but all affectionate relationships are encompassed by our country, and no good man would hesitate to face death for its benefit. Is there anything more outrageous than the monstrous behaviour of those who have ravaged their ancestral homeland with every kind of crime, and are and have been obsessed with its utter destruction?

If we were to hold a contest or competition as to who warrants our strongest sense of obligation, country and parents would rank first, because we are bound to them by the greatest benefits. Next would be

children and the entire household, who look to us alone and have no other source of security; finally, the relations with whom we are on good terms and often share even our possessions. Thus the necessities of life are owed primarily to those just listed; but shared experience, common meals, thoughts, conversation, encouragement, consolation, sometimes even criticism all characterize friendship; and the most rewarding friendship is the one based on similarity in manner of life.

Now, in determining the distribution of all these duties we will have to consider what each person requires and what each can or cannot obtain without us. Degree of closeness will not take the same precedence in every situation, and certain obligations apply more to some than to others. For example, you would be quicker to help a neighbour gather his crops than a brother or a friend, but in a legal dispute you would more likely defend a relative or friend than a neighbour.

Factors of this sort must be examined in any deliberation about duty. We need to become good calculators of obligation, adding or subtracting to determine the sum or remainder. This is how to find out what's owed to each. Still, just as doctors, generals or lawyers, even though they fully understand the teachings of their profession, can't do anything noteworthy without practice and experience, so, too, although we transmit guidelines for observing duty, the seriousness of the subject demands practice and experience. Enough, then, on the topic of how standards for good behaviour and their corresponding duties relate to the just arrangement of human society.

As we stated earlier, honour and appropriate conduct have four sources – and we need to recognize that the most impressive type consists of action undertaken by a great and lofty soul that despises human concerns. This is evident from insults of the following sort:

Young men, you have the souls of women,
And that girl has the spirit of a man!⁴⁵

or something like this:

Salmacidan spoils, earned without sweat or blood.⁴⁶

In contrast, we speak more grandly when we praise the brave and distinguished achievements of the great soul: hence rhetoricians' wide-ranging celebration of Marathon, Salamis, Plataea, Thermopylae and Leuctra,⁴⁷ of our own Cocles, Decii, Gnaeus and Publius Scipio, Marcus Marcellus⁴⁸ and countless others, even the Roman people as a whole, who excel in greatness of soul. We also see glorious wartime achievement rewarded with statues decked out in military

paraphernalia.

But this elevation of spirit, which is manifest in times of danger and struggle, if it lacks justice and fights for personal advantage instead of the common good, becomes a vice. The Stoics are thus correct to define courage as virtue struggling on behalf of fairness. This is why a person who acquires a reputation for courage through treachery or foul play does not deserve praise. For nothing is honourable if it is devoid of justice.

Plato puts it well, then, when he says, ‘Knowledge without justice should be called cunning, not wisdom’,⁴⁹ and a soul braced for danger, if it’s prompted by greed and not the common good, warrants the description ‘brazen’, not ‘courageous’. So when I refer to heroes as brave and great-souled, I also mean decent and honourable, committed to truth, lacking in all deceit – characteristics that are at the heart of a reputation for justice.

Still, it’s very troubling that obstinacy and excessive desire for primacy easily take hold in an elevated and grand spirit of this kind. As we hear from Plato, every custom of the Spartans is incited by their burning desire for victory.⁵⁰ As a result, each of them ends up so great-souled he wants nothing other than to be the chief leader of all – or even better, the only one! Moreover, it’s hard to observe the principle of equality – which is closely related to justice – when you want to dominate everybody else. People like this don’t yield to argument or even legitimate regulation; they resort to bribery and factional politics in order to gain extraordinary wealth and to become superior by force rather than equal in accordance with justice. But the more difficult an accomplishment, the more impressive it is. For there’s no situation that justifies neglect of justice.

Thus those who fight injustice – not those who cause it – deserve a reputation for courage and greatness of soul. True and wise greatness recognizes that integrity in accordance with nature resides in deeds, not in fame. It prefers to be a leader rather than to be seen as one. A person who relies on the false judgement of the ignorant multitude is not to be ranked among great men. The loftier a soul, the more easily a desire for glory incites it to injustice. It’s a rare and risky proposition to face trials and dangers without demanding glory as compensation for achievement.

In general, there are two signs of a great and brave soul. The first is disregard for externals, since it’s been established that a human being must not admire, prefer or pursue anything that isn’t honourable or fitting, or give in to any person, emotion or circumstance. The other is

that a person possessed of such a soul undertakes great and greatly useful projects, knowing their extraordinary difficulty and the challenges and risks they pose to life and various aspects thereof. All the beauty, grandeur and advantage associated with these characteristics are of secondary importance: what takes precedence is their necessary role in fashioning great men. In this way souls become excellent and disdainful of human affairs, an attainment itself marked by two conditions: the person in question must assent only to what's honourable and must be entirely free of emotional disturbance. We need to recognize that the great and brave soul places little value on the very things that seem impressive and remarkable to most people, indeed it despises them on the basis of a secure and stable assessment. It endures apparent troubles, such as come about in the many and varied conditions of human life, without departing from its natural state or abandoning the dignity of a wise man. This is what it means to have a firm and deeply self-consistent soul.

For it isn't consistent for a soul unbroken by fear to be broken by desire, or for a person who survives an ordeal undefeated to be defeated by pleasure. So desire and pleasure should be avoided, and longing for money should be rejected. Nothing so marks a mean and narrow soul as love of riches; and nothing is more honourable and grand than to despise money, if you don't have it – and if you do have it, to use it for acts of kindness and generosity. We should be wary even of desire for glory, as I have indicated. It destroys liberty, which ought to be the goal of any struggle on the part of great-souled men. There must be no pursuing military commands; on occasion they should even be turned down or laid aside.

We should rid ourselves of all emotional disturbance, desire and fear, as well as sadness and anger and excessive pleasure, in order to secure tranquillity of mind and freedom from anxiety, which lead to steadiness and respect. Many people, past and present, try to find such tranquillity by withdrawing from public affairs and escaping into a quiet, apolitical life. These include leading philosophers of good birth and serious, responsible men who couldn't tolerate the behaviour of the populace or the ruling class and spent their lives enjoying their farms and family wealth.

People of this sort have the same goal as kings: to lack nothing, obey no one and enjoy liberty, the defining feature of which is to live just as one pleases. Despite this similarity between power-seekers and recluses, people in the first group think they can achieve their goals by possessing great wealth, the second by being content with their

own estate, even a small one. We shouldn't reject either sentiment out of hand, although the lifestyle of a recluse is easier, safer and less damaging to others, whereas people who apply themselves to public affairs and great achievements are more advantageous to the human race, and live lives more compatible with distinction and renown. So perhaps we should be more accepting of those who avoid public life in order to cultivate their talent for learning or are hindered by illness or some more serious problem, since they yield to others the opportunity to govern the state and earn praise.

But if they have no such justification and merely express their distaste for the military commands and political offices most people admire, not only do they fail to warrant our approval, but in my view they behave immorally. It's hard to fault their decision to reject glory and accord it no value, but they seem to fear inconvenience and hard work and the shame and bad reputation that come with opposition and rejection. Some are inconsistent when confronted with contrary circumstances: they condemn indulgence with great vehemence, yet wallow when in pain; they care not a bit for glory, but are crushed by notoriety – and even in these situations they are inconsistent.

Those who have a natural capacity for public administration should seek office and engage in civic life without any hesitation. There's no other way for a state to be governed or for greatness of soul to be made evident. Moreover, magnificence, disdain for human affairs (as I often point out), mental tranquillity and composure are as appropriate for politicians as for philosophers, perhaps even more so, if they are going to be free from anxiety and live in a serious and self-consistent manner. All of which is easier for philosophers, to the extent that their lives are less open to the assaults of fortune and because they cannot fall as far in case of adversity. As a consequence, it's not surprising that people engaged in public affairs experience more intense feelings and a greater urge to achieve than do those who keep to themselves – and have even more reason to cultivate greatness of soul and freedom from emotional turmoil. If a person does agree to participate in public life, he must be careful to consider not just whether his goals are honourable, but also if he has the ability to accomplish them. This kind of precaution is necessary in order not to lose hope quickly due to lack of energy or grow overly confident on account of desire. Careful preparation is called for before you enter into any serious enterprise.

Because the assumption that military affairs are more important than domestic is so widespread, we must challenge this evaluation.

Many people have sought wars – and often – out of a desire for glory. Such behaviour is especially common among great and talented men, even more so if they are suited to military life and eager to wage war. But an accurate assessment indicates that many accomplishments on the home front have been more important and more distinguished than military action. For example, although Themistocles is rightly praised and has a more brilliant reputation than Solon, and Salamis is called as witness to his famous victory, which is ranked higher than Solon's plan to establish the Council of the Areopagus,⁵¹ the latter achievement is in fact no less distinguished than the former. The first benefited the state on one occasion, the second will benefit it forever. Thanks to Solon's advice, Athenian laws and ancestral institutions are safe. Themistocles made no public statement in support of the Areopagus, but the Areopagus could rightly claim to have assisted Themistocles. For the war in question was conducted under the guidance of the Senate that had been established by Solon.

The same point applies to Pausanias and Lysander. Although it's assumed that the Spartan empire owes its origins to their accomplishments, I still wouldn't value them as highly as the laws and teachings of Lycurgus.⁵² Indeed, it's thanks to the latter that the Spartans have such obedient and courageous armies. To my friends and me, when we were young, Marcus Scaurus didn't seem inferior to Gaius Marius; and when we were active in politics, we didn't consider Quintus Catulus second to Pompey.⁵³ Armaments at the front accomplish little without direction from home. Not even Africanus, who was an extraordinary man *and* general, did as much good for the state in obliterating Numantia as did his contemporary Publius Nasica, when, as a private citizen, he killed Tiberius Gracchus.⁵⁴ True, that affair wasn't strictly civilian in nature, but in fact came close to being martial in that it was concluded through use of force. Nevertheless, it was the result of planning by civilians and didn't involve the army.

And so I affirm the saying, 'Let weapons yield to the toga, let the military laurel give way to panegyric,'⁵⁵ even though jealous scoundrels attack me for doing so. Leaving aside others, isn't it true that when I was guiding the Republic weapons did yield to the toga? There was never any greater danger to the Republic – or greater tranquillity. Thanks to my planning and effort, weapons promptly fell from the hands of our most presumptuous fellow citizens. Is anything as important ever accomplished in war? What triumph is comparable?

I'm allowed to boast to you, my son, for my glory is your inheritance and my deeds set a pattern for you to imitate. Pompey, a

man who received a full share of accolades for military accomplishment, made the same point about me when he remarked, in the presence of many, that there would have been no point in his earning a third triumph if there hadn't been a place to hold it, thanks to my contribution to the Republic. There are civilian acts of courage that are not inferior to military ones, and they warrant even more effort and attention than the latter.

In general, the integrity that we seek in a lofty and grand soul is attained through strength of soul, not body. The body must be disciplined and conditioned to be able to abide by rational advice while completing projects and enduring strain. But the integrity that is our goal depends exclusively on mental processes and attention to the soul. Those who preside over the Republic while wearing the toga are no less useful in this regard than those who wage war. This is why it is civilian counsel that usually determines whether to avoid, conclude or, very often, initiate war, as happened when Marcus Cato's advice succeeded in starting the Third Punic War even after he had died.⁵⁶

As a result, good strategy is more important than valour in battle. Yet we should be careful to proceed from a reasoned consideration of advantage rather than a desire to avoid fighting. We should start a war only if it's clear that peace is all we seek. The brave and steady soul is not disturbed by difficult circumstances, or forced from his place, as the saying goes. He relies on his ready wits and does not veer from a rational plan of action.

Such are the marks of a great soul. What characterizes a great talent is the ability to anticipate the future, to determine ahead of time the range of possible outcomes and to have a plan for each. Such a person doesn't draw up a battle plan, only later to say 'there's something I didn't think of!'. These are the accomplishments of a great and elevated soul, one that relies on foresight and strategy. Rashly confronting an enemy in battle is savage, bestial behaviour. Yet when the situation demands, we must accept our obligation to engage in direct combat and choose death over enslavement and disgrace. When it comes to the destruction and pillage of cities, it's especially important to deliberate carefully so as not to take action that is reckless or cruel. In times of unrest, the great man has a responsibility to punish the guilty, to protect the masses and to stick to the right course of action, regardless of circumstances. For just as there are those who rank military action over domestic, as I noted earlier, so, too, you will find many who regard cunning and risky plotting as grander and more dazzling than quiet, thoughtful advice.

Avoiding danger should never be the basis for our decision: if it is, we will appear timid or unwarlike. It is unnecessary danger – surely the stupidest thing possible – that needs to be avoided. So in approaching a difficult situation, it's best to follow the practice of doctors. They use mild cures for mild ailments, but are compelled to try risky and uncertain remedies with the seriously ill. Only a madman prays for a storm on a tranquil sea; but resisting a storm, by whatever means, is the work of a wise man, more so if the gain from bringing an affair to its conclusion is greater than the loss due to hesitation. Ventures can be dangerous for those who start them, as well as for the state as a whole.

Sometimes life hangs in the balance, at other times reputation or popularity is at stake. We should be quicker to take risks that affect us than to involve the common people in them; and more prepared to fight for honour and glory than for other advantages. Still, many have been found ready to sacrifice money and life for country, yet unwilling to endure the slightest loss of reputation even when the state asks it of them. For example, the Spartan general Callicratides served with great distinction during the Peloponnesian War, yet threw everything away when he disobeyed instructions to withdraw the fleet from Arginusae and avoid battle with the Athenians. His explanation was that the Spartans, if they lost their fleet, could build another, but that he couldn't sail away without disgrace. That incident was a mild blow to the Spartans,⁵⁷ but it was a disaster when Cleombrotus, fearing a bad reputation, too quickly joined battle with Epaminondas and in so doing destroyed the Spartan army.⁵⁸ How much better the action of Quintus Maximus! As Ennius tells it:

One man, by delaying, saved the day,
Never preferring his fame to our survival.
Now and forever the hero's glory burns bright and brighter.⁵⁹

This type of mistake is to be avoided in domestic affairs as well. For people are sometimes reluctant to say what they think, out of fear of unpopularity.

In general, whoever is going to lead the state must adhere to two principles put forth by Plato: first, whatever the issue, protect the well-being of the citizenry by considering it to the exclusion of your own advantage; and second, look after the state as a whole rather than protecting one part at the expense of the rest.⁶⁰ As with legal guardianship, so with governance of a republic: actions should benefit those being cared for, not those doing the caring. Moreover, to

consider the needs of only some of the citizens is to neglect the rest and thereby invite the most harmful situation possible for the state, namely discord and sedition. This is how it has happened that so many adherents of the ‘popular’ and ‘conservative’ causes look after their own side, while few look after everyone. In Athens such division led to major strife, in our own state to subversion and even deadly civil war⁶¹ – an outcome any responsible and courageous citizen fit for leadership will shun and resist as he dedicates himself entirely to the Republic. He will not pursue riches or power, but will look after the entire state by considering the needs of everyone in it. He will not invite hatred and ill-will against others by spreading false accusations. In short, he will hold fast to justice and integrity, suffering great loss in order to protect them, even – as I have said – preferring to die rather than abandon these principles.

Wrangling over political offices is especially unfortunate. Plato once again expressed the point well: ‘Competing to manage the state is like holding a contest among sailors to see which of them should pilot the ship.’⁶² He also advises: ‘Your enemies are those who bear arms against you, not those who have a different opinion about how to protect the state.’⁶³ Publius Africanus and Quintus Metellus had the kind of disagreement he recommends, without mutual bitterness.⁶⁴ We must not listen to those who think it’s necessary to be enraged with enemies and who attribute such behaviour to great-souled, courageous men. On the contrary, nothing is more deserving of approval or better suited to a great, distinguished man than clemency and an ability to make peace. Life among a free population, with equality before the law, requires a relaxed and tolerant attitude. We shouldn’t let our anger with those who interrupt us at inconvenient times or make rude requests turn into useless and offensive irritability. At the same time, gentleness and compassion are held in such high regard that we must make an effort to be stern on behalf of the public good: otherwise it’s impossible to administer the state. But censure and correction must never involve abuse. Punishment, whether in word or deed, should be in the interest of the republic, not the one inflicting punishment.

We should also avoid making the punishment more severe than the crime, or punishing some people harshly while not even indicting others on the same charges; in particular, anger when punishing must be forbidden. A person who sets out to punish while angry will never stick to the middle course between too much and too little, which the Peripatetics recommend⁶⁵ (and rightly – although I wish they didn’t praise anger and describe it as a useful gift of nature!). In truth, anger

is to be rejected under all circumstances, and we must see to it that those who preside over a republic are like laws, which resort to punishment out of a sense of fairness, not fury. We should also avoid arrogant, disdainful and self-aggrandizing behaviour even when things are going well and running in our favour. An intemperate reaction to prosperity or adversity is a mark of instability, whereas it's admirable to remain grounded in all aspects of life, to keep the same expression and demeanour, like Socrates and Gaius Laelius.⁶⁶

King Philip of Macedon came in second to his son⁶⁷ in success and military renown, but surpassed him in affability and human decency. One was always great, the other often disgraceful, which shows the validity of the saying that the higher our rank, the more humbly we should conduct ourselves. Panaetius reports that Africanus, who was his pupil and friend, used to say that

if a horse learns to enjoy the violence of battle through frequent engagements, it's handed over to a trainer to make it easier to manage. Likewise, men who've become uncontrollable and over-confident as a result of success need to be put through a round of training in reason until they recognize the fragility of human affairs and the uncertainty of fortune. ⁶⁸

When things are going well, it's also important to listen to the advice of friends. Their judgement matters more than it did before. At the same time, we need to be careful not to listen to flattery or let ourselves be cajoled, because it's easy to be deceived this way. Our belief that we deserve such praise is the source of countless mistakes. People who are puffed up in their self-assessment suffer terrible ridicule and make enormous blunders.

Our assessment up to this point can be summarized as follows: the greatest achievements and greatness of soul belong to those who govern states the administration of which extends the furthest and affects the largest number of people. And yet many great souls, past and present, live undisturbed by public affairs, studying or attempting great things, while limiting themselves to their own estates. Or, living midway between philosophy and politics, they take pleasure in their household wealth. They don't pile it up through any means possible, but they also don't keep family members from making use of it, and they share it with friends and the Republic if the need arises. Its acquisition should be through socially acceptable means, and should not entail the shame of lending at interest; it should be made available to as many worthy parties as possible; it should be augmented through

rational management, careful attention and thrift; and it should be used for liberal and generous ends, not to gratify lust or satisfy a desire for luxury.

By following these prescriptions, it's possible to live in a grand, spirited and responsible manner while remaining unpretentious, reliable and well disposed towards others.

One further aspect of integrity or honour remains to be discussed. It involves modesty and a certain elegant manner of life, temperance, restraint, the calming of emotions, and due measure in possessions. This is the quality that is called *prepon* ('fitness') in Greek and *decorum* ('appropriateness') in Latin.

The nature of decorum⁶⁹ is such that it can't be separated from good and honourable behaviour. For what's appropriate is good and what's good is appropriate. The difference between the honourable and the appropriate or decorous is easier to understand than to explain. Decorum appears any time that right action does. Thus, it's relevant not only to the present subdivision of the honourable, but to the preceding three as well. Using reason and language wisely, acting deliberately, observing and protecting what's true in any situation are all instances of decorum. In contrast, being deceived, making a mistake, stumbling or being tricked violate decorum as much as insanity or mental illness do. Justice is always decorous, and injustice shameful and indecorous. A similar analysis applies to courage, which, being found in great and masculine souls, seems fit and appropriate for a man, just as its opposite is shameful and inappropriate.

Thus, as I've said, decorum relates to every aspect of right conduct. Its relevance isn't determined through esoteric reasoning, but is self-evident. Every virtue has a recognizable element of decorum or appropriateness, which can be isolated from the virtue conceptually if not in reality. Just as physical attractiveness and beauty cannot be isolated from health, this decorum we are discussing is completely blended with virtue, but can be differentiated conceptually. Decorum in turn comes in two types. We recognize a certain generic decorum, associated with every instance of right action, and another subordinate to it and relevant to particular versions of what's right. The first kind of decorum can be defined as that which suits the excellence of a human being, insofar as our nature differs from that of other animals. The subordinate type is defined as harmony with nature, expressing moderation and restraint in a manner suited to a free person.

The point becomes clear if we consider the kind of decorum sought

by poets – a topic usually treated at length under a different heading. We say that poets preserve decorum when action and speech suit a character or role. For example, if Aeacus or Minos were to say, ‘Let them hate, as long as they fear’ or ‘The father is his children’s tomb’, it would seem inappropriate, because we think of these characters as just.⁷⁰ Yet when spoken by Atreus, the same remark triggers applause as suited to his character. Poets will assess appropriateness on the basis of character. For us, however, nature has imposed a character in accordance with our great distinction and superiority over other living beings. Poets, then, will determine what’s fitting and appropriate for a wide variety of characters, even objectionable ones. But to us nature has assigned traits of consistency, moderation, restraint and modesty, instructing us not to neglect them in any of our relations with other human beings. As a result, it’s clear that both the general decorum associated with all good conduct and the particular decorum observable in each and every virtue are broadly relevant.

Just as the physical beauty of well-proportioned limbs attracts the eye and makes us enjoy the pleasing coordination of the entire body, so, too, when decorum becomes apparent in the course of a life it prompts those in its presence to approve of the orderliness, coherence and sense of proportion it confers on all speech and action. We must therefore direct a certain respect towards human beings – those of the upper ranks and all the rest. It’s arrogant and irresponsible to disregard any person’s sense of self. Still, in analysing human affairs, a distinction is to be made between justice and respect. Justice means not doing harm to others, respect or reverence means not offending or shaming them – which is how the significance of decorum is discerned. Through these examples, then, I think you can understand what we mean by decorum.

Our obligation to act in accordance with decorum is first and foremost a matter of conforming with and preserving nature. If we take this as our guide, we will never go astray and will take action that is naturally intelligent and foresighted, suited to the needs of human society and vigorous and courageous. Nevertheless, decorum is of greatest relevance to our present topic of moderation, for movements of the body and even more so the mind must accord with nature.

Now the inborn force of the human soul takes two forms. The first, called impulse, or *horme* in Greek, snatches a person this way and that. The other, consisting of reason, teaches and explains what to do and what to avoid.⁷¹ So it happens that reason directs and impulse

obeys. Action should never be hasty or negligent and no action should be taken if a credible justification can't be supplied. For this is how duty is allocated. But we need to make certain that impulses obey reason and don't outrun it or desert it due to weakness and lack of will. If they remain tranquil and don't disturb the soul, self-consistency and restraint will be evident. For when impulses are not adequately restrained by reason, they go astray, and energized by desire or aversion, pass well beyond limit and measure. They fail to submit to the needs of the situation and disobey reason, to which they are subordinate by the law of nature. They throw into confusion bodies as well as souls. We easily recognize the expressions of people who are angry, or driven by lust or fear, or overcome with pleasure. In each instance there is a transformation of face, voice, posture and movement.

Thus it's clear (to resume our list of duties) that we must restrain and settle all impulses and, instead, rouse our attention and concern to avoid reckless or careless action or rash and thoughtless behaviour. Nature didn't create us for fun and games, but to have a serious character and challenging, significant commitments. Playing and joking – like sleep and rest – are fine, but only when we have made enough progress on serious matters. And our style of joking should be witty and spontaneous, not extravagant or tasteless. We don't give boys total freedom when they are at play, but only as much as doesn't violate standards of respectable behaviour. So, too, our own joking should reflect a basic decency of character.

In general, there are two kinds of joke, one being low, nasty, disgraceful and obscene; the other elegant, urbane, clever and witty. Roman Plautus, the old Attic comedies, even the books of the Socratic philosophers are crammed full of the latter, and there are collections of Cato the Elder's many clever remarks (called *apophthegmata*) on a variety of topics.⁷² It's easy to tell the difference between a proper joke and a vulgar one. The first is appropriate for the most serious kind of person in a light mood on the right occasion. The other, if it involves a disgraceful subject or obscene language, doesn't suit even an easy-going fellow. There are limits to be observed in play and recreation as well. We don't want to abandon all precaution and, carried away by our sense of enjoyment, end up disgracing ourselves. Examples of appropriate kinds of recreation include exercising on the Campus Martius,⁷³ also hunting.

In any consideration of duty we must remember man's natural pre-eminence over cattle and other beasts. Animals enjoy nothing but

pleasure and are directed towards it by their every impulse. The human mind, on the other hand, develops through learning and thinking. It constantly investigates or explores and is led by the delight it takes in sights and sounds. A person who is inclined to pleasure-seeking, assuming he's not just an animal (for some people are, indeed, human in name only), but is at least a little more upright – even if he is motivated by pleasure, hides or disguises his impulse out of a sense of shame.

Thus it's clear that bodily pleasure isn't really worthy of man's pre-eminence and should be despised and rejected. If a person does value pleasure, he needs to be vigilant in setting a limit on his enjoyment. Food and care of the body should have health and strength, not pleasure, as their goal. Indeed, if we stop to think about excellence and distinction as found in nature, we realize how shameful it is to be spoiled by luxury, to have a precious and indulgent lifestyle, and how beautiful to be thrifty, controlled, serious and sober.

It's also clear that nature has endowed us with two characters or personae. The first is common to all of us as participants in reason and superior to beasts. It provides the entire basis for decency and decorum, and is the source of our interest in identifying duties. The other is assigned to us as individuals with distinctive traits.⁷⁴ Just as there are differences in physical endowment (some people are good at running, others at wrestling), or differences in appearance (some people look respectable, others sexually attractive), there are even greater variations in character.

For example, Lucius Crassus and Lucius Philippus were very charming, even more so Gaius Caesar,⁷⁵ son of Lucius, although he had to work at it. In the same era, Marcus Scaurus and the young Marcus Drusus were unusually serious, whereas Gaius Laelius had an excellent sense of humour, while his friend Scipio⁷⁶ displayed more ambition and a gloomier disposition. Among the Greeks, we hear that Socrates was delightful and witty, always a clever conversationalist, or what the Greeks call an ironist. In contrast, Pythagoras and Pericles⁷⁷ achieved their lofty reputations without any humour at all. Among the Carthaginians, Hannibal, and among our generals, Quintus Maximus,⁷⁸ had a reputation for cunning: they found it easy to conceal, keep silent, deceive, plot and anticipate enemy plans. The Greeks rate Themistocles and Pheraean Jason⁷⁹ above everyone else in this kind of behaviour. And Solon's pretence of madness – in order to protect his safety and be of greater assistance to the state – was especially shrewd.⁸⁰ Others are very different from these men: simple and direct,

they consider it unacceptable to act in secrecy or set traps. They cultivate truthfulness and hate deception. Others still, like Sulla and Marcus Crassus,⁸¹ put up with anything and grovel before anyone as long as they get what they want. We're told that the Spartan Lysander was especially versatile and subservient, while Callicratides,⁸² who succeeded him as admiral, was the opposite. Some people, no matter how powerful, join in conversation as though just one among many. I myself observed Catulus, both father and son, and Quintus Mucius⁸³ act this way. I've heard from older people that Publius Scipio Nasica was famous for comparable behaviour: whereas his father, who halted the absurd projects of Tiberius Gracchus,⁸⁴ was hopeless at small talk. There are countless other contrasting pairs of temperament or habit, with neither side deserving blame.

So at the least everyone should stick to his own habits, as long as they aren't morally wrong. That way the goal of decorum is easier to meet. Although it's true that we must never resist universal nature, as long as it's being respected we can follow our personal inclination. Better and more serious pursuits may well exist; but we should judge ours using our own nature as the standard. There's no point in fighting against nature or in seeking to become what you can't. So the meaning of decorum becomes clearer. As the saying goes, nothing is right if Minerva⁸⁵ is opposed, in other words if it's incompatible with nature.

In short, nothing fits the definition of decorum better than evenness in life as a whole and in individual actions. And you can't maintain that evenness if you neglect your own nature and imitate that of others. Just as we should use our native language and not make ourselves ridiculous by squeezing in Greek terms the way some people do, we also shouldn't introduce inconsistencies into our actions or way of life.

The differences between individual natures are so significant that it can turn out that suicide is the right course of action for one man but not for another, even in the same situation. You don't really think that Cato's situation was any different from that of his men who surrendered to Caesar⁸⁶ in Africa, do you? But it might well have been a moral error if the others had taken their own lives, because their lifestyles were less rigorous and their customary behaviour more accommodating. Nature endowed Cato with extraordinary moral seriousness, which he reinforced through lifelong resolve, remaining always steadfast in purpose. For him it was better to die than to look on the face of a tyrant.

Consider how much Ulysses endured in his years of wandering: his enslavement to women – if you can call Circe and Calypso women! – his eagerness to please in every conversation. Even at home he put up with abuse from slaves and serving-girls, in order to get, someday, what he was after.⁸⁷ But the temperament of Ajax⁸⁸ was such, we are told, that he would have preferred to face death a thousand times rather than suffer as Odysseus did. Each of us who looks to their example will feel obliged to take account of our own sense of self, refusing to alter it or to test whether others' practices suit us. What best suits each person is whatever is most his own.

As a result, everyone should get to know his own disposition and become a stern judge of his own good and bad behaviour. Otherwise theatre people will seem to have more insight than we do. They select not the best dramas, but those best suited to their talents. Specialists in voice perform *Descendants* or *Medus*; those who are good at gesture take on *Melanippa* or *Clytemnestra*. Rupilius, as I recall, was always Antiope, Aesop rarely Ajax.⁸⁹ Will a wise man fail to recognize in life what an actor can see onstage? This is why we work hardest at whatever suits us best. But if necessity on occasion forces us to take action that doesn't match our gifts, we must take every kind of care and precaution to act, if not appropriately, then in the least inappropriate manner possible. Our goal should be to avoid wrongdoing rather than struggling after good things that haven't been given to us.

In addition to the two personae just discussed, there's a third, which is determined by situation or occasion, and a fourth, which we create for ourselves on our own initiative. Whether we control kingdoms, empires, offices, position, wealth, resources – or the opposite – is a matter of chance and occasion. Our avocation, however, depends on our personal choice. For example, some people dedicate themselves to philosophy, others to civil law, still others to public speaking; different people even choose different virtues in which to excel.

Men whose fathers or ancestors have achieved a certain pre-eminence often compete for success in the same area, as did Quintus Mucius son of Publius in civil law and Africanus son of Paullus⁹⁰ in the military. Others add something of their own to the reputation of their ancestors: the same Africanus supplemented military glory with eloquence, as did Timotheus, son of Conon,⁹¹ who, although no less a military success than his father, was also renowned for his learning and intelligence. Sometimes, too, a person will decline to imitate his ancestors and instead follow a personal course: men with high

aspirations but unknown ancestors are especially likely to work this way.

We ought to keep in mind all of these considerations when we try to determine what constitutes appropriate behaviour. First and foremost, we need to decide who we are, what kind of person we want to be, what kind of life to lead: these are the hardest questions. During adolescence, when good sense is weakest, we each determine to lead the kind of life we have come to love. We become committed to a specific course and pattern of life before we're capable of judging what's best. Prodicus tells the story – as reported by Xenophon⁹² – that when Hercules entered young adulthood, which is the time assigned by nature for choosing to enter a path of life, he went into the wilderness, where he sat for a long time trying to decide which of the two paths visible to him, that of Pleasure and that of Virtue, it would be better to follow. Perhaps Hercules, 'born of the seed of Jupiter', as they say, could have such an experience, but it isn't the same for the rest of us: we imitate those who make an impression on us and are swayed by their interests and activities. Most of us are influenced by the teachings of our parents and incline towards their habits and morals. Some are carried away by the judgement of the crowd and choose whatever seems most attractive to the majority. Others, whether through luck or innate goodness, have followed the correct path without benefit of parental guidance.

It's a rare person indeed whose extraordinary intelligence or outstanding upbringing – or both – create the opportunity for deliberating about the mode of life they'll prefer. Any such choice must be aligned completely with the nature of the individual. As stated above, we use native disposition to decide the appropriateness of a given action. When we decide on a general course for our life as a whole, we need to be even more careful that we can adhere to it indefinitely and not falter in any respect. Nature carries the greatest weight in this determination, fortune the next greatest. We should take account of both in choosing a course of life, but of nature the more so. It's more reliable and consistent than fortune; so much so, that the latter often seems like a mere mortal doing battle with immortal nature. Anyone who aligns his plan for life with his own nature, provided it's not vice-ridden, will maintain steadiness and self-consistency – a most fitting achievement – unless by chance he realizes that he made a mistake when selecting his course of life.

If that happens, as it can, then a transformation of habits and plans becomes necessary. If circumstances favour the change, we will make

it quickly and easily. If not, then cautiously and by degree, like the gradual withdrawal from an unsatisfying friendship, which is what wise men recommend in place of an abrupt termination of relations.⁹³ Once we've altered our course of life, we must make every effort to show that we've done so only after careful deliberation.

Although I indicated earlier that we should imitate our ancestors, I need to make exceptions, first in the case of imitating vice, and second, if nature prevents us from replicating certain aspects of their lives – for example, poor health prevented the son of the elder Africanus, who adopted the son of Paullus,⁹⁴ from resembling his father as closely as his father had resembled his. Even if someone lacks the ability to practise law, or address the common people at assemblies, or wage war, he will still have an obligation to excel at things that are under his control, such as justice, good faith, generosity, restraint and temperance, so that less is expected of him in the area in which he is deficient. The best inheritance parents can bequeath to children – one superior to any fortune – is recognition for virtue and achievement. To disgrace such a legacy can only be considered an unspeakable vice.

And because duties are different for different ages, some associated with youth, others with old age, we should say something about this distinction as well. A young man has a responsibility to respect his elders and to choose from among them the best and most reputable in order to rely on their guidance and support. The inexperience of the young must be disciplined and trained by the good sense of their elders. Youth is a time of life that needs to be distracted from sexual feelings and occupied with physical and mental exertion, so as to maximize energy available for military and political obligations. When young men do choose to relax and indulge in fun, they should avoid over-indulgence and immodesty, which will be easier for them if their elders refuse to participate in such activities either. As for old people, their physical exertion should be reduced and their mental exercise intensified. They should make every possible effort to help friends, young people and especially the Republic. The most important precaution for old age is not to give in to laziness and inactivity. Luxurious living, which is shameful at any time of life, is downright repulsive in a senior citizen. An old person who yields to reckless desires commits two wrongs: he disgraces his old age and he makes the recklessness of youth even bolder.

It's not out of place to say something about the duties of magistrates, private citizens and foreigners. A magistrate has a special

charge to recognize that he acts on behalf of the state. He has to maintain its dignity and honour, preserve its laws, issue judgements and remain mindful of anything committed to his trust. A private individual is obliged to live on fair and equal footing with fellow citizens in accordance with the law. He must not be submissive and downtrodden, or self-aggrandizing. He must support the tranquillity and integrity of the Republic. This is the kind of person we consider and call a good citizen. The appropriate conduct of a foreigner or resident alien is simply to tend to his own affairs, without bothering others or being concerned about a state that is not his own.

Generally speaking, these are the duties associated with decorum or suitability as determined by character, circumstance and age. The essence of decorum, however, is to maintain consistency in every action and plan.

All words, deeds, bodily movements and stances have an observable decorum derived from three elements: beauty, orderliness and a polish suited to public presentation. These elements are difficult to describe but easy enough to understand, for they add up to respect for the standards of those with whom we live. Let me say a little about them.

The human sense of shame has copied nature's careful plan. What nature has concealed, every reasonable person keeps out of sight, attending to bodily needs as discreetly as possible. We don't even refer directly to the organs devoted to bodily functions or to the functions themselves. Things that aren't shameful when done in private are obscene to talk about in public. We mustn't pay attention to the Cynics or Stoics who were virtually Cynics when they ridicule us as condemning speech about topics that aren't shameful while calling by name other actions that are. Banditry, fraud and adultery are shameful acts, but not obscene words. Making a baby is a decent act with an obscene name. These same philosophers advance many arguments of this sort against modesty. For our part, we'll stick with nature and avoid anything that offends the eyes or ears. Our posture when standing, our gait, our way of sitting and reclining, our facial expressions, eyes and hand movements should all maintain decorum.

In these matters there are two main prohibitions: don't be effeminate or submissive and don't be rigid or boorish. I can't even agree that behaviour which is inappropriate for us is acceptable for actors or orators. Actors are so modest that, in accordance with a long-standing tradition, they won't appear on stage without underwear. They're afraid they'll be disgraced if certain parts of the body are exposed by accident. Indeed, it's our custom for boys going

through puberty not to bathe in the company of parents, nor sons-in-law with fathers-in-law. We should maintain modest habits of this sort, especially when nature itself provides guidance and instruction.

Of the two types of beauty, the alluring and the respectable, we should regard the former as fit for women, the latter for men. Therefore men should forgo all improvements to personal appearance that aren't respectable, and comparable mistakes in gesture and movement should be avoided. Wrestling moves are often distasteful, and theatrical gestures can seem a little silly: plain and simple merits praise in both contexts. Moral goodness will safeguard the respectability of our appearance, while physical exercise will take care of our looks. Careful grooming isn't objectionable or overdone as long as our aim is to avoid the savage and forlorn appearance of a peasant. The same guideline applies to clothes: there, as in most matters, a middle course is best.

Take care not to walk with slow, languid steps that make you look like a litter on parade. If pressed for time, don't move too fast: it can make you short of breath, alter your appearance and contort your face, all of which signify a lack of composure. An even greater effort is needed to keep feelings in line with nature. We can accomplish this if we're careful not to get perturbed or anxious and instead keep our minds on preserving decorum.

Our souls are moved in two ways: by thought or by impulse. Thought entails the quest for truth, impulse pushes towards action. Make a point, therefore, of directing your thoughts to the best objects possible, and of making impulse submit to reason.

How you speak has a great impact, in both competitive and conversational contexts. Competitive or contentious speech should be limited to legal disputes, assemblies and the Senate; conversation is appropriate for informal meetings, scholarly discussions and family gatherings, and also accompanies dinner parties. The rhetoricians provide guidelines for competitive speaking, but none for conversation, although there's no reason why they couldn't. But teachers respond to the interests of students, and none are interested in this subject, although all the rhetoric schools are packed. Anyway, the rhetorical guidelines for language and thought will apply equally to conversation.

Although voice is but the external manifestation of speech, it needs to meet two goals of its own: namely, to be both clear and pleasant. Each quality should be sought through natural means, although practice will improve the one, and imitation of those who speak

slowly and distinctly will improve the other. Nothing about the Catuli⁹⁵ would lead you to think that they had a refined linguistic sensibility, even though they – like others – were well educated. Still, they were thought to be the best speakers of Latin. They had gentle voices, and their delivery, rather than being forced or slurred, was clear without affectation. They didn't strain to speak, but weren't faint or sing-song either. Lucius Crassus had a richer style, no less witty, but the Catuli enjoyed a comparable reputation as speakers. Their relative Caesar⁹⁶ outdid everyone with his wit and humour. With the weapons of a conversationalist he triumphed over his competitors' courtroom exertions. We need to work at all of these things if we're going to achieve decorum across the board.

Conversational style (in which the Socratics excel) should be easy-going and amusing. Although a person has the floor, he shouldn't exclude others. Taking turns is only fair, in conversation as in anything else. Most of all, consider the topic of discussion. If it's serious, be serious; if it's light, be amusing. Be especially careful that what you say doesn't expose a flaw in character. This tends to happen when we make a point of criticizing people who aren't present, act silly or judgemental, or curse and provoke. Most conversations concern household affairs, politics or culture and learning. If the discussion turns to something else, try to bring it back to whichever of these topics interests those present (for we don't take the same pleasure in the same topics on every occasion). As enjoyable as a conversation might be, make sure there's a reason for starting it and a means of bringing it to an end.

In every aspect of life the best rule is to avoid disturbance, in other words intense feelings that don't obey reason. Conversation must also be free of such emotions. There should be no anger or lust or disengagement or reticence or anything else of the sort. And we should especially make clear that we respect and cherish our interlocutors. Sometimes it does become necessary to express disapproval and we might find ourselves using a loud voice and stronger language. We may even have to put on a show of anger. But we will reproach others in this manner rarely and reluctantly, and only if absolutely necessary, just as we resort to amputation or cauterization only if no other remedy can be found. Even then, we must steer clear of anger, which makes it impossible to act properly or deliberately. In general, criticism should be mild, but expressed in a way that shows we are serious without being abusive. We must clearly communicate that the sharpness of the critique is for the benefit of the

person being criticized. Moreover, even in arguments with our strongest opponents, even if we hear something we don't deserve, the right thing to do is to maintain composure and repress our anger. We can't count on actions we take when we're upset, and they won't be approved by others who are present. It's also bad form to boast, especially falsely. And behaving like the braggart soldier of comedy only makes your listeners laugh.

Because we're pursuing every topic – or trying to! – we should say something about the type of house that will satisfy a leading citizen and office-holder. Its design must be adapted to its use, with special attention to the convenience and status of the occupant. We're told that Gnaeus Octavius, who was the first in his family to become consul, was rewarded for building a magnificent and dignified house on the Palatine.⁹⁷ Because it was visible to the public, it is thought that it helped its owner, who was a new man,⁹⁸ win election to the consulate. Scaurus⁹⁹ demolished this very house and added an annex to his estate. So Octavius was the first in his family to bring the consulate home; but Scaurus, although the son of a very important and famous father, brought not just defeat but also disaster and disgrace into his oversized mansion.

A home should enhance status rather than be its sole basis. The owner does not acquire his honour from the house, but the house from its owner. As with everything else, we need to take account not just of ourselves but of others. A certain spaciousness is acceptable in the house of a prominent man, since it must accommodate numerous visitors and welcome a multitude of people of every sort. Otherwise a large house becomes a source of disgrace for its owner if it remains empty and especially if it used to be busy under a previous owner. It's bad for your reputation to have passers-by say:

O venerable house, alas,
How different an owner owns you now,¹⁰⁰

which can be said about many properties¹⁰¹ in this day and age.

Moreover, be careful, especially if you build from scratch, not to go overboard with spending or showing off. It sets a bad example, because so many people are eager to copy powerful men, particularly in a matter like this. Who imitated the virtue of that amazing fellow, Lucius Lucullus?¹⁰² But look how many imitated the magnificence of his multiple villas! These things have a limit, and there must be a return to moderation.¹⁰³ The same sense of proportion applies to every proposed improvement in lifestyle. So much for this subject.

In considering any course of action, three rules are to be followed. First, impulse must obey reason, for nothing better ensures appropriate action. Second, consider the significance of the proposed undertaking, and apply neither more nor less attention than it demands. Third, maintain a sense of proportion in all matters of status and appearance, primarily by adhering to what's fitting, as we've discussed, and not going beyond. Of these three rules, the most important is to make impulse comply with reason.

Next, I need to discuss the sequence and proper timing of actions. This area of knowledge encompasses what the Greeks call *eutaxis*, orderliness, not in the sense of order as measure or limit, but as in maintaining proper arrangement. To use the term 'orderliness' in this way, we'll define it, following the Stoics, as knowing how to arrange words and actions in their proper place. Thus 'order' and 'arrangement' will be seen to have the same meaning. For the Stoics define 'order' as 'fitting things together in appropriate places'. The 'place' of an action they define as its 'suitability in time'. The opportune timing of an action is called *eukairia* in Greek, *occasio* in Latin. Thus, as I have already stated, orderliness (Latin *modestia*) is knowledge of the proper occasions for an action.

Now it's true, as stated at the outset, that prudence or good sense can be defined in much the same way. But here, under orderliness, we consider restraint, temperance and similar virtues, while topics related to good sense were considered in their place. Relevant to the present set of virtues are matters pertaining to our sense of shame and the approval of those with whom we live.

Just as there's an order to be followed in coherent discourse, so, too, the activities of life should be arranged so as to match and fit with one another. It's disgraceful and entirely wrong to use a tone suitable to a dinner party or intimate conversation when discussing a serious matter. Pericles put it well when the poet Sophocles was his colleague in office and they were conferring about a matter of state. As it happened, an attractive youth walked by and Sophocles said, 'What a good-looking guy!' to which Pericles¹⁰⁴ replied: 'Leave him alone, Sophocles. A government official should keep his hands – and eyes – to himself!'

If Sophocles had said the same thing during an athletic competition, Pericles' criticism would have been unfair. That's how much time and place make a difference. If a lawyer who's getting ready to argue in court goes wandering off to reflect on the case by himself, or even just think about something else, he's not subject to criticism. If he acts the

same way at a dinner party, he'll be seen as rude and out of touch.

Behaviour that really clashes with common decency, like singing in the Forum or some other absurdity, is pretty obvious, and doesn't require a lot of advice or rule-giving. But it takes effort to avoid the small mistakes that most of us don't even recognize as such. An expert flute-player or lyre-player will avoid an error, no matter how minor. Just so, we must see to it in life that nothing is discordant: all the more so, because harmony of actions is better and more important than harmony of sounds.

In the case of lyre-playing, the ear of a trained musician detects even the slightest mistake. So, too, if we aim to be keen and attentive judges and close observers of vice, we will often spot a big problem in a small matter. We will decide whether any given instance of winking, eyebrow-raising (or lowering), frowning, smiling, laughing, staying quiet, speaking, raising or lowering the voice and so forth is suitable, or violates appropriate action in accordance with nature. It can be helpful in making such an assessment to observe the behaviour of others: if it doesn't suit them, we should avoid it too. For reasons I don't understand, we perceive faults more readily in others' conduct than in our own. That's why students quickly correct their own vices when the teacher mimics them for the sake of improvement.

Indeed, when evaluating doubtful cases there's nothing wrong with consulting learned and experienced men for their view of a given course of action (the average person just goes wherever his inclination leads him). In doing so, we must consider not only what someone says, but also what he thinks and why. Painters, sculptors and even poets like to have their works examined by non-specialists in order to fix anything the majority might find objectionable. On their own and in consultation with others they try to identify their mistake. So, too, we will change, correct, undertake or avoid many actions on the basis of others' assessment.

Actions taken in accordance with civic custom and tradition require no guidelines, since the customs themselves are guidelines. No one should be led astray into thinking that because Socrates or Aristippus¹⁰⁵ spoke or acted contrary to tradition and local custom, they have licence to do the same. Socrates and Aristippus earned their freedom through acts of great and divine goodness. And the reasoning of the Cynics¹⁰⁶ is completely unacceptable: it's antithetical to our sense of decency, without which nothing good or right is possible.

We ought to respect and look after people who are known for the greatness and decency of their lives, who think well of the Republic

and have been honoured by holding offices or commands. We should hold old age in high regard, defer to office-holders and cherish citizen and foreigner alike – the latter whether their business is public or private. In sum, so as not to go on about specifics, we should cherish, defend, and preserve the bonds that join and unite the whole human race.

There is already general agreement as to which crafts and professions are suitable or unsuitable for free citizens. Occupations that incur unpopularity, such as customs-officer or money-lender, don't meet with our approval. It's also sordid and unfit for a free man to earn a living by selling his labour as opposed to a skill. A wage in this case is merely a reward for slavery. Those who sell what they have just bought from merchants also demean themselves, for they don't make a profit unless they lie, and nothing is more disgraceful than falsehood. Craftsmen of every sort engage in a low enterprise, and the workshop has nothing freeborn about it. The skills that minister to pleasure earn no approval: 'fishmongers, butchers, fowl-fatteners, and fishermen', as Terence puts it. To which we might add: 'ointment-sellers, dancers and all that troupe of gamblers.'¹⁰⁷

But skills that require greater intelligence or aim to meet important needs, such as medicine, architecture and the teaching of legitimate subjects are perfectly respectable for those whose rank they suit. Small-scale commerce is beneath us, but if it's grand and complex, involving extensive transport and multiple honest exchanges, it's not entirely objectionable. And if such a man is wearied, or better, satisfied with his profits, and having often passed from high seas to harbour now moves from harbour to farm-owning, he deserves approval by any measure. But of all productive enterprises, none is better than agriculture, none more beneficial, more pleasant, more worthy of a free person. This is a topic I've discussed at length in *Cato the Elder*, so you can find what's relevant to the issue there.

I think that's enough about the various aspects of moral integrity and the derivation of duties therefrom. However, it's often the case that a conflict or competition arises between appropriate actions as to which of two is more in line with morality – a topic that Panaetius does not treat. Because knowledge, community, greatness of soul and moderation are the four sources of moral integrity, we'll often need to make a comparison among them.

It's right to regard the duties that derive from our sense of community as closer to nature than those derived from knowledge, a point that can be confirmed by the following argument. Let's say a

wise man leads a life fully supplied with all resources and that in complete tranquillity he ponders to himself and contemplates every topic worth knowing. If his isolation is such that he does not see another human being, he will depart from life.

Chief of all the virtues is the wisdom the Greeks call *sophia*. Practical intelligence, which they call *phronesis*, we know to be something else, namely knowledge of what's to be sought and avoided. But the wisdom I ranked first consists of knowledge of divine and human affairs, which encompasses relations between and among humans and deities. If this is the greatest good, then it surely follows that appropriate action associated with relationships is the most important kind. Study and contemplation are, in effect, truncated or underdeveloped if no action follows from them. Such action is best exemplified by preservation of the advantages of human life. It thus involves human social interaction, which, as a consequence, takes precedence over study. Every good person displays this judgement in actual fact. For who is so eager to observe and learn the nature of the universe that if, in the course of exploring and contemplating the most suitable topics possible, he was suddenly informed that the country was facing a crisis which he could relieve – who, under these circumstances, wouldn't completely abandon his studies, even if he thought he could count all the stars or measure the universe?¹⁰⁸ And he would do the same thing if a friend or relative faced danger or loss.

This is how we can tell that the duties associated with justice, which concern the well-being of the human species – which ought to be the highest priority of any person – take precedence over our obligation to learning. And yet even people whose lives are entirely wrapped up in acquiring knowledge have not shied away from improving the lot of humankind. For they have educated many, making them better citizens, more fit for public affairs, as Lysis the Pythagorean educated Epaminondas of Thebes, or Plato taught Dion of Syracuse,¹⁰⁹ or many others taught still others. If I've helped our republic in any way, it's thanks to teachers and the lessons with which they've guided and enriched me.

It's not just while they're alive and present that learned men improve and educate those who are eager to learn. They accomplish the same thing after death through the writings they've left behind. No aspect of laws, morals or the government has been overlooked by them: they seem to have dedicated their free time to our business. People committed to study and wisdom devote their intelligence and insight to practical affairs: this is why eloquent speech, as long as it's

sensible, is better than the most acute thought if it lacks eloquence. Intellectual activity turns in on itself, eloquence embraces those with whom we are joined in community.

Swarms of bees don't gather for the sake of fashioning honeycombs; they fashion honeycombs as a result of their natural preference for gathering together. So, too, and even more so, human beings, when they congregate, display great creativity in thought and action. Therefore, unless the virtue that consists of protecting humans and derives from human sociability supplements scientific knowledge, knowledge will seem lonely and worthless. And the great soul, if withdrawn from human interaction, has a certain wildness and bestiality about it. So it happens that connection with other human beings is more important than pursuit of knowledge.

Some people argue – falsely – that human community and sociability arose from our inability to acquire on our own the natural necessities of life. They say that if food and shelter were provided by a magic wand, then each one of us of his own volition would abandon his affairs and dedicate himself to learning. It just isn't so. For each one of us would abandon solitude and seek a companion in study; we would want to take turns teaching and learning, speaking and listening. Thus every duty that protects the companionship and sociability of human beings ranks above our duty to know and understand.

We should probably also consider whether our natural sense of community in fact always takes precedence over moderation and restraint. For there are certain shameful and disgraceful acts that the wise man will refuse to perform, even to save his country.

Posidonius¹¹⁰ has collected many examples, but they are so repulsive and obscene that it would be shameful to repeat them. So we won't perform these actions, even if the Republic asks us to do so on its behalf. But this isn't really a problem, because it can't be in the Republic's interest for a wise man to act this way.

Therefore, let this be taken as settled: in deciding between different duties or appropriate actions, the type determined by human sociability has priority. Deliberate action presupposes knowledge and foresight and thus is more valuable than foresight alone. No more on this subject. We've explored the topic enough that it's not hard to set priorities among appropriate actions. But even with respect to relationships, there are degrees of duty, with our first obligation to the immortal gods, second to our country, third to our relatives, and so forth for the rest.

From this brief discussion, it will be clear that people are often uncertain not just whether an action is right or wrong, but also which of two right actions is better. Panaetius ignored this topic, as I said. We'll get to it soon enough.

Death and Burial of Cicero

Selections from ancient authors

The death of Cicero in 43 BCE became the stuff of legend within a few years of his murder. Different accounts of the death are quoted in Seneca the Elder's memoirs of the schools of rhetoric. Declaimers took turns offering imaginary advice to Cicero as he faced the soldiers sent by Antony or gave their own twist to the story of his death. We might see the obsession with Cicero in the early imperial schools of rhetoric as a reflection of the instability of his example: did he show the way to attainment of glory through eloquence, or was he one more victim of the march of history? As Seneca suggests, even those who held Cicero in least regard as a politician expressed grudging respect for the philosophical manner of his death.

Seneca, Suasoriae 6.17, quoting the historian Livy¹

Marcus Cicero fled the city just before the arrival of the triumvirs.² He realized that he was no more able to be rescued from Antony than Cassius and Brutus had been from Caesar. He fled first to his Tusculan villa, from there by a circuitous route to his place in Formiae, planning to board a ship and depart from Caieta. The winds repeatedly returned him to shore, and seasickness made it impossible for him to endure the tossing of the ship. At last, disgust with flight and life took hold of him. He returned to the villa up the coast, about a mile inland, saying, 'Let me die in the country I have often saved.' It's generally agreed that his slaves were prepared to defend him bravely and loyally. But he ordered them to set down the litter and endure quietly whatever cruel fortune would bring. Sticking his head out of the litter and holding his neck steady, he was decapitated. That wasn't enough for the stupid cruelty of the soldiers. They cut off his hands, saying they had written something against Antony. The head was carried to Antony, who ordered it placed between the two hands on the rostra, where as consul, ex-consul and, in that very year, adversary of Antony, Cicero had been heard and admired, like no other human voice. Lifting their tear-soaked eyes, the decent people of

Rome could barely stand to look at the remnants of the murdered citizen.

Seneca, Suasoriae 6.22, quoting Livy's epitaph for Cicero

He lived sixty-three years. Apart from its violence, his death couldn't really be considered untimely. His talent allowed him to accomplish much and to gain the rewards of his accomplishments. For a long time he enjoyed good fortune. Despite his long prosperity, he suffered grievous wounds: exile, the destruction of the political party he supported, the heartbreaking loss of his beloved daughter. He bore none of these setbacks in a manner befitting a man, except his death. To be fair, it wasn't undeserved: he suffered no worse from his conquering enemy than what he had imposed on the defeated when he was in control.

But even with his vices weighed against his virtues, he was an extraordinary and memorable man, and it would take a Cicero to give him the eulogy he deserves.

Seneca, Suasoriae 6.24, reporting Asinius Pollio's opinion of Cicero

Only Asinius Pollio³ gave a hostile account, yet even he, although unwillingly, provides a full tribute as follows: It would be superfluous to proclaim the genius and energy of this man who will be remembered forever thanks to his many great achievements. Nature and fortune were equally obliging to him, in that his looks, prosperity, and health persisted into old age. Then, too, long-time peace, in whose arts he had been educated, worked to his advantage. For due to the old-time severity of the courts, a huge multitude of defendants emerged, most of whom he held obligated for his legal patronage. Circumstances of seeking and holding the consulship were most favourable to him, through divine generosity, and his own planning and action. Would that he had been able to endure good fortune with greater moderation and bad fortune with greater courage. For whichever one came his way, he didn't think it could change – which led ill winds of envy and hatred to blow hard against him, and gave his enemies more confidence in their assault. He picked fights more enthusiastically than he fought them. But since the virtue of no mortal being is perfect, judgement should consider the larger share of a person's life and talent. And I wouldn't even judge his death as

deplorable had he himself not so deplored death.

As the years passed, Cicero was remembered less for his political successes and failures, and more for the ideals expressed in his writings. From the fourth century CE we have twelve short epitaphs for Cicero, which collectively emphasize his talent and virtue, as well as the loyalty of his friends and admirers, even after his death. Several of the epitaphs make a point of using Ciceronian phrasing and philosophical themes to eulogize Cicero. None of the writers can be securely identified.

Euphorbius

Here lies a man of Arpinum. He was buried by the hands of a friend.⁴
He was the greatest and most distinguished orator.
A citizen-enemy slew him cruelly.
Antony, you accomplish nothing. His brilliant writings survive.
You finished Cicero off with a single blow, but
Tullius lashes you for eternity.

Julianus

The body covered in this tomb is that of the great man Cicero.
He was famous for his genius.
He was enemy to bad men and protector of the good.
When he was consul, Rome – undeserving – nearly died.
But his attentive care kept her unharmed.
He drove her enemies from the city and made them pay.

Hilasius

Orator without peer, light and jewel of the Senate,
Saviour of the country, author of eloquence.
Thanks to his eternal talent the Latin language thrives,
Made brilliant by the light of his brilliance.
He died an unworthy death at evil hands.
Tullius is buried in a narrow tomb.

Palladius

You who worship the name of Cicero found in books,
Look at the place where he lies buried.
As orator and as greatest citizen,
He was famous for his deeds, more so for his speech.
Think not that fortune has harmed the hero.

He lives forever on the lips of learned men.

Asclepiadius

I was Marcus Cicero,⁵ renowned through all the world.
A small urn now shelters my remains.
The hand of a citizen snatched me from the fatherland,
Though I had snatched the fatherland from death.
You who read the name of Tullius on this stone,
Do not neglect to say: Marcus, fare thee well!

Eusthenius

Tullius of Arpinum was born to the equestrian rank.
But by his virtue became consul at Rome.
Wicked Catiline and his deadly conspirators
Experienced his vigilant protection of his fellow citizens.
Yet still – O piety! – three tyrants killed him.
Lamia⁶ placed him in a pious tomb.

Pompilianus

He reached the heights of Latin eloquence.
As consul he snatched the country from slaughter.
He lost his life to the bloody sword of the triumvirs.
Here lies Tullius buried in this earth.
His life was short, his fame eternal.
What death removed, glory restored.

Maximinus

Here lies Tullius, a name revered throughout the ages.
Famous for his achievements, and his talent too.
Criminal weapons killed him cruelly
Because he was the faithful defender of the fatherland.
The tyrant gained nothing from the unholy slaughter.
His genius lives. Only a body died.

Vitalis

Prince of the Roman people, jewel of the Senate,
Best orator and first-rate citizen.
Avenger of conspiracy, enemy of the evil ones.
He died proscribed by a triumvirate.

His death was cruel, his decapitation shocking.
Thanks to Lamia, he rests in this tomb.

Basilus

Priest of learning, amazing author,
Tullius rose from humble to on high.
Oratorical talent made his name.
Virtue carried it to the stars.
Guilty fortune plucked his body from the pyre
And chose this place to inter his remains.

Asmenius

Prince of eloquence, remembered for great deeds,
Tullius died an undeserving death.
He filled all the lands with his famous name.
His talent is free of a body crushed by death.
He lives and prevails, renowned throughout the earth,
Whose limbs lie buried in this mound.

Vomanius

Here lies famous Cicero buried by the piety of Lamia.
Fortune betrayed him to an undeserved death.
Best speaker, good citizen, lover of his city.
Bane of evildoers, refuge for the good.
Sixty-three years of age,
He left behind a fatherland enslaved.

Notes

A NOTE ON THE ANCIENT PHILOSOPHICAL SCHOOLS

Ancient philosophers later than Socrates tend to be grouped into schools, although the fixity and significance of the groupings were matters for debate in antiquity and continue to be so today. Plato was recognized as the founder of the Academy, which existed both as a place of study and a philosophical approach until the first century BCE. Cicero several times refers to a division within the Academy between 'New', represented by Philo of Larissa, and 'Old', defended by Antiochus of Ascalon. Although a modern scholarly industry has grown up around the idea that Cicero was an Academic, it is not at all clear what such a designation meant to him other than a willingness to entertain multiple perspectives on key issues. 'Peripatetic' is the term applied to a more or less continuous line of followers of Aristotle, especially his immediate successor Theophrastus. The Stoic school regarded Zeno of Citium (335–263 BCE) as its founder. It flourished in the Roman milieu and was an important intellectual force well into late antiquity. Cicero was especially attentive to the teachings of the so-called 'middle Stoics', Panaetius (c. 185–109 BCE) and Posidonius (c. 135–c. 51 BCE). The Epicurean school was named after its founder Epicurus (341–270 BCE), who, like Zeno, lived in the latter part of the fourth century BCE. Although Cicero routinely disparages Epicureanism, it seems clear that Epicurean thought was appealing to a large number of his contemporaries, not least the Latin poet Lucretius, whose six-book poem *On the Nature of the Universe* (*De Rerum Natura*) is an important source of ancient Epicurean teaching.

Modern introductions to post-Aristotelian classical philosophy are readily available. Especially useful is the annotated collection of fragments, *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, edited by A. A. Long and D. Sedley, 2 volumes (Cambridge 1987). See also *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy*, edited by K. Algra (Cambridge 1999).

In the present volume, I have referred to the teachings of the various ancient philosophical sects as known from other texts only when absolutely necessary. It seems best, especially for the reader first

encountering Cicero, to try to understand his ideas and outlook on their own terms. Cicero saw himself as communicating with readers, not as engaging in polemic against scholastic rivals.

All dates in the following endnotes are BCE.

NOTES TO PHILOSOPHY AT ROME

On the Ultimate Good and Evil, or On Ends, 1.1–12

1. *Brutus*: The addressee of the work, the senator Marcus Junius Brutus, briefly ally then assassin of Julius Caesar. The treatise was composed during the spring and summer of 45, as indicated by Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 13.32 and 13.21a (Shackleton Bailey 305 and 327).
2. *write on other topics ... status in life*: It is not entirely clear what Cicero – or his critics – meant by unsuitability. It may be that the engagement with technical detail required of philosophy was considered beneath the dignity of a Roman aristocrat, and was more appropriate to a Greek house philosopher.
3. *the book*: I.e., Cicero's lost *Hortensius* (see *Philosophy and Oppression*, note 1).
4. *'digging ... anything'*: Terence, *Self-Tormentor* 17.
5. *Ennius ... Euripides*: Ennius (239–169), Roman poet and playwright. Marcus Pacuvius (220–130), south Italian poet and tragic playwright and painter. Euripides, Greek tragedian of the late fifth century.
6. *'Well then ... version of either?'*: Cicero introduces a possible objection on the part of an imagined interlocutor. Caecilius Statius and Terence (Publius Terentius Afer), both ex-slaves and playwrights at Rome, second century. Menander, leading exponent of New Comedy in Athens, late fourth century.
7. *Sophocles ... Atilius*: Sophocles, fifth-century Athenian tragedian. Identity of Atilius uncertain, but he is surely a Latin writer of the second century.
8. *Lucilius*: Gaius Lucilius (180–102/1) seems to have been a friend of Scipio Africanus and Gaius Laelius (who figure prominently in *On Friendship*); he wrote verse satire of which many lines but no complete books survive.
9. *Plato*: Greek philosopher, c. 429–347.
10. *literal translation*: Cicero refers to the work of *interpretes*, public translators of diplomatic messages.
11. *Chrysippus ... Posidonius*: The six writers listed are all Stoics who wrote in Greek. Their names are given in roughly chronological order. The most important were Chrysippus (c. 280–207), who defended the views of the Stoics against their critics, and Posidonius (c. 135–c. 51), who revised Stoic teachings in the light of new political and scientific developments.
12. *Afranius*: Lucius Afranius, comic playwright, second century.
13. *Persius ... Rutilius*: Publius Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus (185–129), also called Africanus, celebrated in Cicero's treatise *On Friendship*. Publius Rutilius Rufus (consul 105), known for his interest in jurisprudence and in Stoic philosophy. Persius, known only as a learned contemporary of the poet Lucilius (see Cicero, *On the Orator* 2.25).
14. *people of ... Sicily*: Lucilius seems to indicate he is writing for audiences that either barely know Latin or are too far away to do him any harm.
15. *that book you sent me*: None of Brutus' writings survive.
16. *Latin books ... bad Greek*: Cicero seems to refer to works written by Greek and

Roman followers of Epicurus; cf. his disparaging remarks near the opening of Book 1 of *Tusculan Disputations*.

17. *Albucius ... Scaevola*: Titus Albucius (praetor c. 105), Roman senator and orator, renowned for his Graecomania. Scaevola, most likely Quintus Mucius Scaevola (consul 117).
18. *Chaire*: Greek for 'greetings'.
19. *Scaevola ... Brutus*: Publius Mucius Scaevola (consul 133), adviser of Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus, one of several distinguished jurists among the Mucii Scaevolae. Manius Manilius (consul 149), well-known jurist whose works continued to be cited centuries after his death. Marcus Junius Brutus (probably the tribune of 83), father of the Marcus Brutus who was Cicero's addressee here and Caesar's assassin.

NOTES TO AGAINST FEAR OF DEATH

Tusculan Disputations, Book 1

1. *Brutus*: The work is addressed to Marcus Junius Brutus, a powerful senator and financier, and in time, one of the assassins of Julius Caesar. Brutus wrote works of philosophy, history and poetry, none of which survive.
2. *Homer ... Romulus*: Homer and Hesiod, traditionally regarded as the earliest Greek poets. Scholars still tend to view Archilochus as somewhat later, probably the second half of the seventh century. The exact date of the founding of Rome was a matter of controversy in Cicero's day, although it was generally agreed to have taken place in the mid- to late eighth century. Romulus, the semi-legendary founder and first king of Rome.
3. *Livius ... Ennius*: Livius Andronicus staged the first Latin play in 240. Ennius, prolific writer, whose most famous work, the *Annals*, was an epic poem on early Roman history.
4. *Origines*: Early Latin historical work by Cato the Elder (234–149) that told of the founding and customs of Italian cities.
5. *Fabius ... Parrhasius*: Gnaeus Fabius Pictor adorned the temple of Salus with paintings in 304. Sculptor Polyclitus and painter Parrhasius, renowned Greek artists of the fifth century.
6. *Epaminondas ... Themistocles*: Epaminondas, famous early fourth-century Theban general; victor at Leuctra (371), one of his important victories over Sparta, and at Mantinea (362), where he died. Themistocles, successful Athenian general, renowned for the strategy that led to the Greek victory over the Persian navy at the battle of Salamis (480).
7. *Galba ... Laelius*: Servius Sulpicius Galba, Scipio Africanus and Gaius Laelius, political leaders at Rome during the mid-second century. For more on Scipio and Laelius, see the treatise *On Friendship*.
8. *Lepidus ... Gracchi*: Political leaders at Rome, late second century. Gaius Papirius Carbo (as tribune in 130), responsible for the law that extended vote by secret ballot. Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus, killed in political violence in 133, partly because of his support for land reform. Marcus Aemilius Lepidus Porcina (consul 137, proconsul in Spain 136), an influential orator.
9. '*Latin treatises*': Cicero seems to refer to lost works by Epicurean philosophers.
10. *Aristotle ... Isocrates*: Aristotle (384–322), philosophical successor to Plato and tutor of Alexander the Great; author of numerous philosophical treatises.

Isocrates (436–338), important Athenian orator and educator.

11. *Tusculan estate*: One of several villas owned by Cicero; Tusculum, a hill town, about 15 miles southeast of Rome.
12. *unnamed interlocutor*: Cicero does not identify the other speaker in the dialogue. Medieval manuscripts use the headings M and A, which are sometimes interpreted to mean teacher (Magister) and student (Auditor), but there is no reason to assume that Cicero intended these titles. On the other hand, the interlocutor does give the impression of being in need of, impressed by and open to Cicero's philosophical acumen. Recently, one scholar has argued that in *Tusculans* Cicero seeks to exemplify a new form of education for the rising generation of Romans: see I. Gildenhard, *Paideia Romana* (Cambridge 2007).
13. *Cerberus ... Rhadamanthus*: Cicero refers to various features of traditional Greco-Roman myths of the Underworld. Cerberus, the three-headed dog guarding the entrance to the Underworld; Cocytus and Acheron, rivers found there; Tantalus and Sisyphus, examples of figures undergoing eternal punishment; Minos and Rhadamanthus, mythical judges. The quoted lines are from earlier Latin plays and poems, precise sources unidentified.
14. *Lucius Crassus ... Marcus Antonius*: Probably Lucius Licinius Crassus (consul 95) and Marcus Antonius (consul 99), both of whom Cicero treats as outstanding orators in his own work *On the Orator*. As he will throughout the present dialogue, Cicero mixes, compares and contrasts mythology and history.
15. *Demosthenes*: Athenian orator, 384–322.
16. *Crassus ... Pompey*: The interlocutor names famous Romans who have died in recent years. Marcus Licinius Crassus (consul 70, 55), member of the first Triumvirate, died fighting the Parthians in 53. Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus, or Pompey the Great, Roman general, politician and sometime ally of Cicero; defeated by his father-in-law, Julius Caesar, at the battle of Pharsalus in 48, died in Egypt shortly thereafter. Cicero has him fall on his sword, but other sources say that soldiers of the Greco-Egyptian leader Ptolemy killed him.
17. *tombs of ... the Metelli*: Tombstones and monuments lined the Appian Way outside the city gate. Cicero lists four of the famous families who would have buried their dead there.
18. *Epicharmus*: Greek comic poet from Sicily, late sixth–early fifth century.
19. *Pythian Apollo*: The god who presided over the oracle at Delphi.
20. *developing ... reasonable inference*: A good description of the philosophical method Cicero prefers throughout his writings.
21. *Nasica ... Aelius Sextus*: Publius Cornelius Scipio Nasica (consul 162, 155) and Sextus Aelius Paetus (consul 198). Cicero cites the description of the latter in Ennius' *Annals*. All of the adjectives he uses here contain a version of the Latin word *cor*, meaning 'heart'.
22. *Empedocles*: Sicilian poet and philosopher, fifth century.
23. *Zeno*: Zeno of Citium (335–263), founder of Stoic philosophy.
24. *Aristoxenus*: Fourth-century Greek writer.
25. *Xenocrates ... tripartite*: Xenocrates (396–314), student of Plato and later head of the Academy. Pythagoras, Greek thinker of the sixth century; according to Cicero, he was the first person to use the term 'philosophy' (see *Wisdom Across the Ages*). Plato's account of the tripartite soul is developed in his *Republic*.
26. *Dicaearchus ... Deucalion*: Dicaearchus, student and follower of Aristotle, who

wrote works on politics, philosophy and geography. Pherecrates of Phthia, otherwise unidentified; in myth, Deucalion, with his wife Pyrrha, the only survivors of a great flood sent by the gods.

27. *endelecheia* ... *unbroken motion*: See, for example, Aristotle, *On the Heavens* 1.2 and 2.3.
28. *Democritus*: Greek philosopher, c. 460–370.
29. *his book about the soul*: Presumably Plato's *Phaedo*, which presents Socrates' reflections on the possibility of life after death.
30. *casci*: The Latin word Cicero uses here is said by his contemporary Varro (*On the Latin Language* 7.28) to be an archaic term.
31. '*Romulus ... gods*': From Ennius' *Annals*.
32. *Hercules ... Liber*: Hercules, the heroic son of Jupiter (Greek Zeus), performed a series of labours that had him travel throughout the Western Mediterranean, even to the Atlantic Ocean. Liber, the Roman equivalent of the Greek wine-god Dionysus; at Rome, especially regarded as a god of the common people.
33. *sons ... battle*: The sons of Tyndarus are Castor and Pollux, who according to legend rallied the Roman forces at the battle of Lake Regillus (496).
34. *Ino*: Also called Leukothea, Greek goddess associated with rites of initiation.
35. *the Mysteries*: The Eleusinian Mysteries, dedicated to the Greek goddess Demeter. The exact teaching Cicero has in mind here is uncertain.
36. *Classmates*: A Latin comedy by Caecilius Statius (c. 230–168).
37. *Behold ... ancestors*: The lines quoted here could serve as an epitaph for the poet Ennius, but their authorship is unknown.
38. '*Alive ... men*': Supposedly from the epitaph Ennius wrote for his own tomb.
39. *Phidias ... Minerva*: Phidias carved the statue of Athena (Roman Minerva) for the Parthenon in Athens, fifth century.
40. *Lo ... souls*: Author of these lines, to be sung onstage by a ghost, unknown.
41. *Appius ... Avernus*: Appius Claudius Pulcher (consul 54); Lake Avernus, near modern Naples, the site of the entrance to the Underworld in Roman legend. The source of the quoted lines is unidentified.
42. *Pherecydes of Syros*: Greek prose author, sixth century.
43. *man of my clan*: Cicero alludes to Servius Tullius, sixth king of Rome, whose name suggests a link to Cicero's family, the Tullii Cicerones.
44. *Tarquin the Proud*: Seventh and last king of Rome; his expulsion in 509 led to the founding of the Roman Republic.
45. *Magna Graecia*: 'Great Greece', the Greek-speaking territory of southern Italy. Followers of Pythagoras held political and intellectual influence in the area.
46. *Plato ... Pythagoras*: It is unlikely that Plato ever met Pythagoras, who probably died several generations before Plato was born, but Platonic thought does show extensive familiarity with Pythagorean teachings.
47. *mathematicians*: By this term (Latin *mathematici*) Cicero may refer to geometers in general or to a particular subgroup of the Pythagoreans known by that name.
48. *soul is number*: This belief is associated with Pythagoras; Aristotle and his followers hypothesized the existence of a fifth element besides the standard four of earth, air, water and fire, as indicated earlier in this treatise.
49. *Panaetius*: Panaetius of Rhodes (c. 185–109), important Stoic writer and influence on Cicero. Elsewhere Cicero tells us that Panaetius lived with Publius Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus Africanus, the Roman leader who presided over

the destruction of Carthage.

50. *the soul ... stars*: Various ancient physical systems differentiated between the misty lower atmosphere and the clear ethereal realm of the heavens. In postulating that the heavens are made of the same substance as the human soul, Cicero adheres closely to Stoic teaching. For another account of post-mortem travel to the stars, see Book 6 of *On the Republic*.
51. *Theophrastus*: Theophrastus of Eresos (372–287), successor of Aristotle and prolific author in his own right.
52. *'carried ... from Libya'*: Cicero seems to quote from two works by Ennius in this single sentence – the first from the play *Medea in Exile*, the second from the *Annals*.
53. *philosophers ... natural science*: Here Cicero refers to the Epicureans. His language resembles that found in the great Epicurean poem, *On the Nature of the Universe*, by his contemporary Lucretius.
54. *'deep Acheruntian realms ... death'*: From Ennius' *Andromache*.
55. *'know thyself'*: The maxim inscribed on the temple of Apollo at Delphi.
56. *as I reported ... On the Republic*: Cicero alludes to Plato, *Phaedrus* 245c–e. The quoted passage which follows is a lengthy citation of his own earlier work, *On the Republic* 6.27–8.
57. *Socrates ... measuring a square*: Plato, *Meno* 82b–85b.
58. *He develops ... body*: I.e., the *Phaedo*, with particular reference to 73a.
59. *Simonides ... Hortensius*: As the passage suggests, all were known for seemingly super-human feats of memory. Simonides (556–468), Greek lyric poet. Theodectes student of Plato, Isocrates and Aristotle. Cineas, ambassador to Rome after the battle of Heraclea in 280. Charmadas and Metrodorus, Greek intellectuals of the first century. Hortensius, Quintus Hortensius Hortalus (consul 69), Cicero's contemporary and rival in eloquence.
60. *Archimedes ... movements*: Archimedes of Syracuse, Greek mathematician of the third century, invented a sphere with multiple moving parts that illustrated the movement of celestial bodies. Cicero discusses the device at *On the Republic* 1.24.
61. *Ganymede*: Cicero combines Homer's story of Ganymede, son of Tros, with another one that makes him son of Laomedon. In either case, he was reportedly carried to Mount Olympos so that the gods, especially Zeus (Roman Jupiter), could enjoy his beauty.
62. *'our soul is god'*: Attributed to Euripides, fifth-century Athenian writer of tragedy. The original context of the quotation is unidentified.
63. *Consolation*: Written to help Cicero overcome his grief at the death of his daughter in February 45; it survives only in a handful of quotations, such as the present one.
64. *Placed beneath ... snows*: Attributed to Lucius Accius (170–c. 86), Roman poet, playwright and literary scholar, in his play, *Philoctetes*.
65. *The sky ... grass*: Source uncertain.
66. *Socrates ... defence attorney*: Plato's *Apology* purports to be a transcript of the speech Socrates delivered in his own defence before an Athenian jury; he was accused of introducing new gods and corrupting the youth of Athens. See also note 95 below.
67. *Socrates believed ... the body*: Here Cicero follows the argument and phraseology of Plato's *Phaedo*, e.g. section 78c.

68. *Cato ... means of dying*: Cato of Utica, also known as Cato the Younger, committed suicide in 46 rather than submit to the rule of Julius Caesar.
69. *In the words of Socrates*: Plato, *Phaedo* 67d.
70. *Mytilene*: The main city of the island of Lesbos.
71. *Family resemblance ... be born*: The remarks on resemblance are designed to counter the Stoic claim that psychological similarities across generations indicate that souls have beginnings – and thus ends.
72. *Crassus*: Publius Licinius Crassus (consul 97), father of the triumvir Marcus Licinius Crassus, and grandfather of the Crassus who, according to Valerius Maximus 6.9.12, had to sell his goods to pay his debts.
73. *Epicurus ... Democritus*: Epicurus (341–270), important philosopher who taught that pleasure is the goal of life; greatly influenced by the atomist philosophy of Democritus of Abdera (mid-fifth century).
74. *Hegesias ... Ptolemy*: Hegesias, Greek philosopher, also known as ‘Death-monger’. Ptolemy II, Greek ruler at Alexandria, early third century.
75. *Callimachus ... book by Plato*: Callimachus (c. 305–240), important Greek poet and literary critic; Theombrotus is called Cleombrotus in the poem in question. The book of Plato is understood to be the *Phaedo*, which discusses the immortality of the soul.
76. *If we had died ... good*: Cicero seems to refer to the loss of status and authority that accompanied the dictatorship of Julius Caesar.
77. *Metellus ... Priam*: Quintus Caecilius Metellus, Roman conqueror of Macedon in 148; he had four sons all of whom became consul. Priam, mythical king of Troy at the time of its destruction by the Greeks.
78. *His barbarian wealth ... his blood*: From Ennius’*Andromache*.
79. *Pompey*: For Pompey the Great, see note 16 above.
80. *Neopolitans ... Greek*: As Cicero implies, Naples and Puteoli (modern Pozzuoli) held large numbers of Greek speakers. Naples, originally a colony of Cumae, itself the earliest Greek settlement on mainland Italy; Puteoli was preceded by a Greek settlement known as Dicaearchia.
81. *what we lack*: I.e., whatever is good about life.
82. *Brutus ... tyrant*: Lucius Junius Brutus rallied the Romans to expel King Tarquin and his family in 509, but was killed in battle when Tarquin’s son attempted to return.
83. *elder Decius ... grandson*: Cicero refers to three men, all named Lucius Decius Mus, who died in battle in 340, 295 and 279, respectively.
84. *two Scipios ... Geminus fall*: Gnaeus and Publius Cornelius Scipio died fighting the Carthaginians in Spain in 212. Lucius Aemilius Paullus (consul 219) and Gnaeus Servilius Geminus died in the battle of Cannae against Hannibal in 216.
85. *Marcellus ... Gracchus*: Marcus Claudius Marcellus, Lucius Postumius Albinus and Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus (granduncle of the famous tribune), like the two Scipios, Paullus (see note above) and Geminus, also died during the Second Punic War (218–201) which had pitted Rome against Carthage.
86. *centaur ... Camillus*: Centaur, a mythical creature, half-human, half-horse. Agamemnon, mythical leader of the Greek expedition against Troy. Marcus Furius Camillus, Roman leader at the time of the Gallic invasion of Italy (390).
87. *Endymion ... hasn’t yet awakened*: According to Greek myth, Zeus gave Endymion eternal youth and beauty, provided he kept sleeping; the goddess of the moon fell in love with him and visited him periodically.

88. *Troilus*: Young son of King Priam, died in the war against the Greeks.
89. *Trails ... unawares*: Author unknown.
90. *Hypanis ... single day*: Hypanis, the modern River Bug; Pontus, region of Asia Minor (modern Turkey) that borders the Black Sea. On the short-lived creatures mentioned here, see Aristotle, *History of Animals* 552b.
91. *Chaldaean soothsayers*: Cicero here associates astrology and fortune-telling with Chaldaea, a region of ancient Babylon.
92. *Theramenes*: One of the Thirty Tyrants imposed upon the Athenians after their defeat by Sparta in 404. More moderate than his colleagues, they turned on him and sentenced him to death: see Xenophon, *Hellenica* 2.3.56.
93. *last drop ... a sound*: A popular Greek drinking game called *kottubos* entailed flinging the last drops of wine in one's cup and making a prediction based on the sound they produced.
94. *Critias ... shortly thereafter*: Critias, one of the Thirty Tyrants, died in battle with the Athenian exiles who restored democratic government in 403, just a few months after the execution of Theramenes.
95. *Socrates ... jury*: The trial and death of Socrates in 399 are recounted in Plato's *Apology* and *Phaedo*, among other sources.
96. *Here's what Plato has him say*: Cicero here translates Plato, *Apology* 40c–41d.
97. *Minos ... Triptolemus*: Judges in the Underworld, according to Greek myth.
98. *Orpheus ... Hesiod*: Early Greek poets, the first two regarded as legendary.
99. *Palamedes, Ajax*: Palamedes, Greek hero falsely accused of accepting a bribe from Priam. Ajax killed himself after the weapons of the dead Achilles were allotted to Odysseus (Roman Ulysses).
100. *asking questions ... here*: Socrates imagines himself putting questions to the mythical figures Agamemnon, Odysseus and Sisyphus.
101. *'Is this how ... juggling debts'*: The Greek writer Plutarch tells a similar story (*Spartan Sayings* 221f). The ephors were elected officials in Sparta; Lycurgus was the city's legendary lawgiver.
102. *when Cato writes*: A reference to Cato the Elder.
103. *Thermopylae*: The battle that saw a handful of Spartans pitted against the invading Persian army in a fight to the death, 480. The Greek version of the epitaph that follows, by the poet Simonides, is recorded at Herodotus, *Histories* 7.228. At 7.226 he tells a version of the conversation about the number of Persian arrows.
104. *'I bore him ... for his country'*: Plutarch preserves a collection of so-called *Sayings of Spartan Women*, included as sections 240c–242d of his *Moralia*.
105. *Lysimachus ... Theodorus*: Lysimachus, one of Alexander the Great's generals, became king of Thrace and Macedon after his death. Theodorus (also known as Theodorus the Atheist), a Cyrenaic philosopher of the late fourth–early third century.
106. *'My friends ... departed'*: Plato, *Phaedo* 115c–e.
107. *Diogenes*: The famous Cynic philosopher of the fourth century. The Cynics were famous for their attacks on conventional mores.
108. *Anaxagoras*: Fifth-century philosopher, friend of Pericles, teacher of Euripides and Thucydides; his birthplace was Clazomenae.
109. *Achilles ... chariot*: Achilles' mistreatment of the body of Hector is described in the *Iliad*. The quoted lines that follow are from Ennius' *Andromache*.
110. *Accius*: See note 64 above.

111. *Mother ... across the earth*: Cicero quotes from the lament of Deiphilus, wrongly slain by his father, from *Iliona*, a play by Marcus Pacuvius (see *Philosophy at Rome*, note 5).
112. *septenarii*: A type of verse commonly used in the sung portions of Roman plays.
113. *Impaled ... life is done*: Presumably, Ennius, *Thyestes*.
114. *Pelops*: In myth, the father of both Atreus and Thyestes. The quoted passages are presumably from Ennius' *Thyestes*.
115. *Magi*: Persian priests.
116. *Hyrkania*: A territory to the southeast of the Caspian Sea.
117. *Chrysippus*: Important Stoic philosopher and prolific writer (280–208).
118. *Lycurgus ... Epaminondas*: Lycurgus and Solon, said to have provided the legal code for Sparta and Athens, respectively. For Themistocles and Epaminondas, see note 6 above.
119. *Curius ... countless others*: Cicero lists a string of Roman generals and statesmen from the third and second centuries, all of whom were involved to one degree or another in combat with Rome's mortal enemy Carthage.
120. *'Die ... heaven'*: The Spartan's point is that there's nothing more for Diagoras to achieve, short of becoming a god.
121. *an Argive priestess ... found dead*: The full story is found at Herodotus 1.31.
122. *Trophonius ... divination*: Indeed, in some versions Trophonius himself became a god, with the power of delivering oracles.
123. *Silenus ... Midas*: Silenus, mythical son of Pan and teacher of the Greek god Dionysus. Midas, mythical king of Phrygia.
124. *Crantor*: Greek philosopher, fourth century.
125. *We thought ... for you*: Two fragments from Euripides' *Cresphontes*.
126. *Alcidamas*: Greek philosopher, c. 335–275.
127. *Erechtheus*: Mythical king of Athens, honoured with a temple on the Acropolis.
128. *Codrus*: Another mythical king of Athens, at the time of the so-called Dorian invasion.
129. *Menoceus*: Mythical prince of Thebes; his death prevented the conquest of the city.
130. *'by dying ... enemy'*: Cicero cites a verse line from Ennius' *Iphigeneia* pertaining to the self-sacrifice of Agamemnon's daughter in order to allow the Greek fleet to sail for Troy.
131. *Harmodius ... Leonidas*: Harmodius and Aristogiton, lovers who died in 514 in a failed attempt to kill the Athenian tyrant Hippias. Leonidas died at the battle of Thermopylae (480).
132. *Let no one ... lament*: The quotation from Ennius, together with the phrase cited earlier ('Alive I flutter on the lips of men,' p. 23), are thought to form his epitaph for himself.
133. *May my dying ... groan*: A Greek version of these verse lines is quoted by Plutarch, *Lives of Solon and Poplicola* 1.4.

NOTES TO THE DIVINITY OF THE UNIVERSE

On the Nature of the Gods 2.18–44

1. *Velleius ... Cotta*: Earlier in the treatise Cicero describes Gaius Velleius as a Roman senator and leading exponent of Epicureanism, and Quintus Lucilius

Balbus as a Roman Stoic. Neither is well known beyond the dialogue. Lucius Aurelius Cotta, whose house furnishes the location for the dialogue, was praetor in 70 and an early political ally of Cicero.

2. *as ... Socrates puts it*: The reference is to Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 1.4.8.
3. *air*: Like most ancients, Balbus here differentiates between the earth's atmosphere (Latin *aer*) and the region of sky beyond (*aether*); the atmosphere was thought to be a mixture of moisture emanating from the earth and the pure element of the upper sky.
4. *Academics*: Philosophical opponents of the Stoics (see main Introduction). In this dialogue they are represented by Cotta, the chief speaker in Book 3.
5. *Zeno*: See headnote to the endnotes. Well known for his pithy, even koan-like statements of Stoic doctrine. Later Stoics expanded and re-stated his core positions as part of an ongoing attempt to deal with the criticism and misunderstanding of other schools.
6. *the universe is alive and rational*: For further discussion of Zeno's views of the universe, matter and god, see Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Philosophers* 7.1.
7. *Cleanthes*: (331–232) A close follower of Zeno. His Hymn to Zeus provides a more elevated version of some of the arguments presented here.
8. *admixture of heat*: 'Mixture' is a key aspect of Stoic physics, allowing for the simultaneous coexistence of more than one element in a single substance. It is a categorically different model of physical interaction from the Epicurean notion of atomic composition.
9. *fiery heat ... familiar objects*: Here Balbus differentiates between two types of fire, the everyday or destructive and the cosmic or constructive. A famous Stoic definition calls god 'designing' or 'artistic fire, proceeding methodically towards the coming-into-being of cosmic order'. Cf. Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods* 2.57, Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Philosophers* 7.156.
10. *He says ... universe is animate*: A reference to Plato, *Timaeus* 89. It is interesting to note that Balbus speaks warmly of both Plato and Aristotle, despite the hostility of their alleged followers, the Academics, towards the Stoics.
11. *wise*: Balbus takes for granted the Stoic view that human wisdom consists of life in accordance with nature. It is thus from one standpoint tautological to call the universe wise, but by doing so he makes clear that there is no need to posit an entity outside or beyond the physical universe to whom to ascribe wisdom. Wisdom and intelligence are immanent in nature for the Stoics, not transcendent.
12. *Chrysippus*: The most prolific of the early Stoic philosophers (c. 280–207).
13. *'since the sun ... supplies sensation'*: In other words, for Cleanthes the animating fire in each one of us is the cosmic fire from which the gods/stars are formed.
14. *according to Aristotle ... animate beings*: The source of the particular claim cited by Balbus is unidentified.
15. *greatest indicator ... divine power*: Balbus seems to suggest that if the stars and constellations were simply the product of some external plan or reason they would remain still. The fact that they move, albeit in an orderly fashion, indicates that they have intention or will. For a good discussion of the role of stars in Stoic theology, see K. Vogt, *Law, Reason, and the Cosmic City: Political Philosophy in the Early Stoa* (New York 2008).
16. *As far as I'm concerned ...* : Balbus sums up this section of his discourse with reference to the Stoic criterion of perspicuity or clearness: the existence of the

divine is clearly attested in and by physical reality. His position is quite different from that of Christians and others who use the complexity of creation as evidence for the existence of a separate, external creator. For the Stoics, the orderly movement of reality is what is meant by god, and vice versa.

NOTES TO WISDOM ACROSS THE AGES

Tusculan Disputations 5.5–11

1. *this fault*: I.e., our tendency to augment misfortune with fear and sadness that are within our control.
2. *Seven Sages ... Nestor*: *Seven Sages*, semi-legendary figures, renowned for their ability to deliver wise utterances in challenging situations; for a full discussion, see R. Martin, 'The Seven Sages as Performers of Wisdom', in C. Dougherty and L. Kurke (eds.), *Cultural Poetics in Archaic Greece* (Cambridge 1993). Lycurgus, regarded as having created the distinct Spartan legal code. Ulysses (Greek Odysseus) and Nestor, important figures in Homer's epics.
3. *Atlas ... to myth*: Atlas and Prometheus, of the generation of Titans overthrown by the gods of Olympus. Cepheus, mythical king of Ethiopia, husband of Cassiopeia, father of Andromeda, father-in-law of Perseus. Although Cicero accepts that these are not historical personages, he notes that their stories could only have been created by individuals who held a philosophical outlook on the natural world.
4. *Pythagoras*: Greek philosopher of the sixth century.
5. *Heraclides Ponticus*: Fourth-century philosopher, student of both Plato and Aristotle; he wrote dialogues that may have influenced the shape of Cicero's philosophical writings. (Phlius and Leon are otherwise unknown.)
6. *Magna Graecia*: Greek-speaking territory of southern Italy.
7. *Socrates ... Anaxagoras*: Cicero attempts to establish an unbroken genealogy of philosophy from its earliest days to his own. Anaxagoras, born in Clazomenae, settled in Athens around 456; taught the fundamental homogeneity of all reality. His pupil Archelaus was in turn a teacher of Socrates, according to Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Philosophers* 2.4.
8. *Carneades*: Carneades of Cyrene (214/13–129/8), considered the founder of the New Academy. Cicero admired and employed his method of arguing for and against the teachings of the dogmatic philosophies without falling into a position of radical scepticism.

NOTES TO PHILOSOPHY AND OPPRESSION

On Divination 2.1–7

1. *Hortensius ... Academics*: The *Hortensius*, named after Cicero's oratorical rival Quintus Hortensius Hortalus (consul 69), now lost despite its profound influence on later antiquity, was an exhortation to the study of philosophy. The *Academics* dealt with the theory of knowledge; it originally took the form of two books, but was rewritten as four: we possess Book 2 of the earlier version and parts of Book 1 of the later.
2. *On the Nature of the Gods ... On Fate*: All three survive. Cicero seems to have regarded them as forming a cycle on theology and religion.
3. *On the Republic*: Most of this work survives, though in damaged condition.

4. *Consolation*: See *Against Fear of Death*, note 63.
5. *On Old Age*: A surviving work, also known as *Cato the Elder*, after Cato the Elder, who is the main speaker in the dialogue.
6. *About the Orator ... Orator*: *About the Orator* makes the case for rhetoric as part of a broad liberal education. *Brutus* traces the history of oratory at Rome. *Orator* focuses on disputes over the right style of public speaking. All three are extant.

NOTES TO FRIENDSHIP

Laelius, or On Friendship

1. *The augur ... 'the sage'*: Quintus Mucius Scaevola, called 'the augur' in part to differentiate him from his more famous son, 'the pontifex', or chief priest, of the same name. 'The augur' (consul 117) would have been quite old when Cicero (born 106) went to study with him. Gaius Laelius (consul 140), the main speaker in the following dialogue. There are varying explanations for his nickname, 'the sage' or 'wise one': some attributed it to his skill as an ambassador, others to his quick thinking in withdrawing a key piece of legislation when conservatives lined up against it.
2. *toga of manhood ... Scaevola*: Cicero refers to the apprenticeship to a recognized political leader that characterized a young man's transition from private to public life.
3. *Atticus ... Pompeius*: Titus Pomponius Atticus (110–32), Cicero's close friend and collaborator. Publius Sulpicius Rufus, as tribune in 88, sided with Marius in opposition to Sulla, as a result of which he was executed when the latter came to power. As consul in 88, Quintus Pompeius Rufus left Rome, only to return as part of Sulla's military occupation.
4. *Fannius ... Africanus*: Gaius Fannius became consul in 122 when he broke dramatically with Gaius Sempronius Gracchus with whom he was previously allied. Publius Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus Africanus (185/4–129) was a leading Roman politician and general, perhaps best known for the destruction of Carthage in 146. By presenting so many names from so many different periods in a few short paragraphs, Cicero points to the intergenerational network of Roman leadership, while also giving an air of historical specificity to his fictional dialogue.
5. *main speaker*: Marcus Porcius Cato (234–149), also known as Cato the Censor, a leading Roman politician and writer of the second century; the main speaker in *Cato the Elder*.
6. *Lucius Acilius*: Second-century specialist in law.
7. *one such sage ... Apollo*: In Plato, *Apology* 21a, Socrates tells of his visit to the oracle of Apollo at Delphi, where he was told that no one was wiser than he.
8. *Nones*: One of the named days of the Roman month, either the fifth or the seventh, depending on the length of the month.
9. *Paullus ... Galus*: Lucius Aemilius Paullus (consul 182, 168) lost two sons in childhood. Gaius Sulpicius Galus (consul 166). Cato's older son died in 152, shortly after being elected praetor.
10. *two cities*: Numantia and Carthage. The bare style of Laelius' list of Scipio's achievements echoes the language of surviving Roman funerary epitaphs, including those of various members of the Scipio family, now preserved in the

Vatican Museum.

11. *what men suspect*: Various rumours circulated in the aftermath of Scipio's sudden death in 129, which happened not long after the passage of a controversial decree that he had introduced.
12. *put my trust in the men of old*: Laelius here refers to the Pythagoreans, who believed in reincarnation of the human soul.
13. *that three-day discussion*: Cicero has Laelius refer to a 'conversation' re-created by Cicero in his treatise *On the Republic*.
14. *like some ... wise man*: Laelius refers to one of many provocative Stoic teachings, namely that only the wise man is good. Their point is that virtue arises from perfect understanding of nature, an understanding no single human being can attain in a lifetime.
15. *Fabricius ... sages*: Gaius Fabricius Luscinus (consul 282, 278), Manius Curius Dentatus (consul 290, 284, 275, 274) and Tiberius Coruncanius (consul 280) are mentioned by Laelius as practitioners of traditional Roman wisdom, which seems closer in meaning to prudence or good judgement in our terminology.
16. *Paulli ... among the good*: Laelius speaks collectively of individual men praised elsewhere in the dialogue for their goodness or virtue. Here he insists that they can legitimately be called good, even if their conduct did not meet the exacting standards of the most rigorous Greek philosophers.
17. *'fully alive'*: Here, as often, Cicero quotes a snippet from the extensive writing of Ennius; exact source not known.
18. *fire and water*: Considered necessities of life. Denial of fire and water was part of a decree of banishment from Roman society.
19. *a certain learned man ... discord*: Empedocles of Agrigentum in Sicily (c. 492–432), poet and philosopher who wrote of the alternating power of Love and Discord.
20. *Pacuvius*: See *Philosophy at Rome*, note 5. In the myth presented in the play mentioned by Cicero, Orestes – the son of Agamemnon and murderer of his mother, Clytemnestra – was joined in exile by his close friend Pylades.
21. *questioned ... people you mention*: Fannius reportedly studied with the important Stoic philosopher, Panaetius of Rhodes (c. 185–109), whose writing on duties strongly influenced Cicero's work of that title.
22. *love ... is derived*: Laelius links Latin *amicitia* ('friendship') with *amor* ('love').
23. *Fabricius and Curius*: See note 15 above.
24. *Tarquin the Proud ... Maelius*: Tarquinius Superbus, the last king of Rome, driven into exile in 509 by a band of angry aristocrats who proceeded to found the Roman Republic. Spurius Cassius, condemned to death in 485 for allegedly seeking to restore the kingship. Spurius Maelius, killed by an angry aristocrat for the same reason in 439.
25. *Pyrrhus ... Hannibal*: King Pyrrhus of Epirus fought against the Romans in southern Italy in the early third century. Hannibal, the famous Carthaginian general, brought his troops and elephants almost to the gates of Rome during the Second Punic War.
26. *It's no wonder ... what I say*: Once again Cicero has a speaker disparage Epicurean philosophy, which identified pleasure as the ultimate good of human life.
27. *Coriolanus ... ancestral homeland*: Gnaeus Marcius Coriolanus, a disgruntled Roman aristocrat, conspired with neighbours of Rome to challenge the city's

domination over nearby territories in the early years of the Republic (c. 490).

28. *Vecellinus ... Maelius*: Spurius Cassius Vecellinus (consul 502, 493, 486), executed in 485 on the charge of seeking to become king. A similar accusation was made against Spurius Maelius, who died in political violence in 439.
29. *Gracchus ... threatening the state*: Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus, the perennially controversial Roman politician, killed in 133 by a gang of senators and their clients for his role in land reform and related measures. Tubero, although the nephew of Scipio, seems not to have held high office at Rome, but is instead known for his literary and philosophical interests.
30. *Gaius Blossius of Cumae*: Stoic philosopher associated with both Tiberius Gracchus and Aristonicus, an insurrectionary king of Pergamum (133–129).
31. *fitting penalty*: Blossius committed suicide after Roman forces defeated his patron, Aristonicus.
32. *Papus ... Coruncanius*: Aemilius Papus and Gaius Fabricius Luscinius (consuls together 282, 278; censors 275). Manius Curius Dentatus (consul 290, 284, 275, 274). Tiberius Coruncanius (consul 280).
33. *Carbo ... Gracchus*: Gaius Papirius Carbo (tribune 130), responsible for passing a law extending vote by ballot. Gaius Porcius Cato, grandson of Marcus Porcius Cato (the Elder) and Lucius Aemilius Paullus, outlived both Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus and became consul in 114, but was eventually forced into exile.
34. *his brother*: Gaius Sempronius Gracchus, younger brother of Tiberius Gracchus (tribune 123, 122). Like his brother, he died in civil strife. Although Gracchus supported Fannius (of this dialogue) when he sought the consulship, Fannius opposed Gracchus' attempt to extend Roman citizenship to neighbouring Latins.
35. *Gabinian Law ... the Cassian*: The Gabinian Law of 139 introduced voting by secret ballot; the Cassian Law of 137 extended the use of ballots to jury trials in criminal cases.
36. *Themistocles*: See *Against Fear of Death*, note 6.
37. *avoid ... sake of many*: Cicero seems to be referring to the Epicureans.
38. *others*: These would seem to be Epicurus, Aristippus or their followers.
39. *counter-love*: Cicero uses a neologism, Latin *redamare*, to emphasize the distinctively reciprocal nature of human relations.
40. *Tarquin ... exile*: See note 24 above.
41. *saying of Bias*: Bias of Priene, one of the traditional 'Seven Sages' of ancient Greece. A Greek version of this saying is preserved at Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 2.13.4 = 1389b. It may just be a recommendation to protect one's interests within a friendship, but Scipio interprets it as implying that a person is a better candidate for friendship the more reasons he gives for enmity. Presumably Scipio would reject the modern saying, 'Keep your friends close, but your enemies closer.'
42. *the extent of friendship ... underestimated*: In this difficult paragraph Laelius seems to suggest that helping a friend maintain a reputation for virtue is an appropriate way of securing his political influence, even if it sometimes means acquiescing in decisions we ourselves would not have made.
43. *'Trouble ... friend'*: From an unidentified tragedy of Ennius.
44. *Philus ... Quintus Maximus*: Lucius Furius Philus (consul 136), praised elsewhere by Cicero for his eloquence and erudition (*Brutus* 108, *On the Orator* 2.154). Publius Rupilius, though born into a family of tax-collectors, became

consul in 132, thanks in part to his friendship with Scipio. Lucius Mummius (consul 146) supervised the notorious destruction of the Greek city of Corinth (146); he is otherwise unknown. Quintus Fabius Maximus Aemilianus (consul 145), the elder, if somewhat less accomplished, brother of Laelius' friend Scipio.

45. *Neoptolemus ... departure*: Neoptolemus, the son of Achilles, had been raised by his maternal grandfather, Lycomedes, king of Skyros, who did not want to see him depart for the war at Troy.
46. *heard Cato put it*: Presumably Cato the Elder.
47. *Pompeius ... Metellus*: Quintus Pompeius Rufus, new man (see *On Duties*, note 98), became consul in 141, allegedly defeating Laelius for the office that year by pretending not to be a candidate. Laelius (consul 140). Quintus Caecilius Metellus Macedonicus (consul in 143): at the dramatic date of the dialogue (129), Laelius' colleague in the College of Augurs.
48. *seek out others ... can associate*: Laelius describes a process the Stoics called *oikeiosis*, or appropriation, by which they refer to the individual organism's natural understanding and acceptance of its place in the universe.
49. *licence for ... sin*: Laelius here warns against the use of friendship for sexual gratification.
50. *Timon of Athens*: Notorious misanthrope, first mentioned in the fifth century (Aristophanes, *Lysistrata* 806).
51. *Archytas of Tarentum*: Pythagorean philosopher and scientist, contemporary of Plato, fourth century.
52. *'Acquiescence ... hate'*: From *Andria*, or *Andrian Girl* 69, by the Roman comic playwright Terence (first half of the second century).
53. *For some men ... never*: The source of this saying, presumably by Cato the Elder, is unidentified. During antiquity clever remarks came to be attributed to legendary wise men, such as Cato at Rome or Aesop in Greece.
54. *He says no ... everything!*: Terence, *Eunuch* 250.
55. *Papirius ... tribunes*: Gaius Papirius Carbo (tribune 130) unsuccessfully proposed a measure to allow re-election of tribunes.
56. *so-called 'popular law' ... people*: Laelius plays on the designation 'popular' of one political faction at Rome, the way a contemporary American politician might play with the terminological relationship between the Democratic party and democratic values.
57. *in the consulship of ... Quintus Maximus*: I.e., 145.
58. *Crassus ... speech*: The Crassus in question was probably Publius Licinius Crassus Dives Mucianus, an ally of the Gracchi. Cicero elsewhere speaks favourably of his oratorical style (*Brutus* 98, *On the Orator* 1.170).
59. *'Does Thais ... thanks?'*: Spoken by the braggart soldier Thraso at Terence, *Eunuch* 391, and answered by Gnatho the parasite, or hanger-on, eager to stay on his good side.
60. *You've made me ... most craftily*: From Caecilius Statius, *Heiress*; 'the witless and gullible old man' is a regular figure of fun in surviving plays of Roman comedy.
61. *love ... 'love'*: Again the etymological association of *amor* ('love') and *amicitia* ('friendship'), via the verb *amare* ('to love'). See also note 22 above.
62. *Paullus ... Tiberius Gracchus*: Laelius groups as members of an older generation Lucius Aemilius Paullus (consul 182, 168), commander of the victorious

Roman army at Pydna (168); Marcus Porcius Cato (consul 195, censor 183–178); Gaius Sulpicius Galus (consul 166); Publius Cornelius Scipio Nasica (consul 191); and Tiberius Gracchus (consul 177), father of the reformist Gracchi brothers.

63. *Furius ... Tubero*: Laelius names as his contemporaries Lucius Furius Philo (consul 136); Publius Rupilius (consul 132); Spurius Mummius (consul 146), brother of Lucius Mummius; and, as members of the rising generation, Publius Rutilius, aged roughly thirty at the dramatic date of the dialogue (eventually consul 105); Quintus Aelius Tubero, perhaps the same man who was praetor in 123; and Aulus Verginius, identity uncertain.

NOTES TO ON DUTIES, OR LIFE IN ACCORDANCE WITH HUMAN NATURE

On Duties, Book 1

1. *Marcus*: The addressee, named Marcus Tullius Cicero, like his father, was born in 65, and was thus twenty-one when the treatise was composed. At Athens he studied with the Peripatetic philosopher Cratippus, whom the elder Cicero had met during his governorship of Cilicia. The younger Marcus survived the proscriptions of 43 that killed his father and uncle, and eventually became consul in 30, followed by governor of Syria and proconsul of Asia.
2. *speeches ... almost as numerous*: Fifty-eight speeches of Cicero survive in whole or part. We have references to at least eighty others that do not survive. By the time he composed *On Duties* Cicero had published at least twenty-eight books on philosophical topics, significantly more if we include those that deal with rhetoric and public speaking.
3. *Demetrius ... Theophrastus*: Demetrius of Phaleron, Athenian philosopher and political leader, appointed absolute governor of Athens by Cassander, one of the successors to Alexander the Great in the late fourth century. Theophrastus, Aristotle's successor as head of the Lyceum at Athens, a prolific author.
4. *Plato ... Demosthenes*: Plato (c. 429–347), the famous Athenian philosopher, whose dialogues mostly feature Socrates. Demosthenes (384–322), a leading orator and statesman at Athens.
5. *Aristotle ... Isocrates*: See *Tusculan Disputations*, note 10.
6. *duty ... responsibility*: The Latin term *officium* embraces various English meanings, including duty, obligation, responsibility, even commitment. In this treatise, it conveys the Stoic concept of actions suited to our status as human beings, actions that fit with the order of the universe. The feeling of duty derives from an inner commitment to align oneself with nature rather than from obedience to external rules.
7. *discussed the matter elsewhere*: The relationship between practical ethics and the definition of the ultimate good is discussed in Book 2 of Cicero's *On the Ultimate Good and Evil*.
8. *Aristo ... Herillus*: Ariston of Chios (fl. 260), an early Stoic who differed from the mainstream of the school in denying the possibility of appropriate actions; for him there were only perfect or vicious actions. Pyrrho of Elis (c. 365–270), regarded as the originator of the Sceptical approach, which denied the possibility of knowledge. Herillus of Carthage (third century), an early Stoic. Cicero elaborates on objections to these three philosophers at *On the Ultimate Good and Evil* 5.23.

9. *Panaetius ... failed to do*: Despite the fault-finding, Cicero here signals his reliance on the teachings of Panaetius (see *Friendship*, note 21), who himself wrote a work *On Duty*.
10. *Another way ... provided*: The discussion makes better sense if we remember that for Cicero duty is not an externally imposed obligation but an internally driven action. Thus we might say that a 'middle duty' is an *action* for which a plausible justification of its performance can be provided.
11. *'once sensed ... wisdom'*: Cicero adapts a remark of Socrates at Plato, *Phaedrus* 250d, to different ends.
12. *we must not take ... assent to it*: For the Stoics, on whom Cicero draws heavily, withholding assent from false opinions or sensory presentations is the key to ethical action.
13. *Sulpicius ... Pompeius*: Gaius Sulpicius Galus (consul 166), famous for successfully predicting a lunar eclipse, thus keeping Roman soldiers from panicking before the battle of Pydna. Sextus Pompeius, uncle of Pompey the Great; Cicero refers to his interest in geometry at *Brutus* 175.
14. *ager ... Tusculanus*: Cicero mentions two places that would have been familiar to his son: Arpinum, an Italian hill-town and ancestral homeland of the Ciceros, and Tusculum, where Cicero owned a villa, the setting for his *Tusculan Disputations*. (Technically, the term *ager Tusculanus* refers to all the land held by the people of Tusculum.)
15. *excellent remark of Plato*: Plato, *Letter* 9.358a.
16. *'trust' ... 'truly happens'*: The Latin links the noun *fides* with the verb *fieri*, meaning 'becomes' or 'happens'.
17. *Crassus ... feed an army*: Marcus Licinius Crassus (consul 70, 55), an exceptionally wealthy Roman politician and general; he died in 53 while fighting Rome's eastern enemies, the Parthians.
18. *No sacred bond ... kingdom*: From an unidentified tragedy of Ennius.
19. *Caesar ... himself*: Gaius Julius Caesar (born 100), Roman general, statesman and dictator, assassinated by a conspiracy of senators in 44. Throughout the three books of *On Duties*, Cicero reflects on the career of Caesar and the morality of his actions and those of his opponents.
20. *how Plato depicts philosophers*: The reference may be to Plato, *Theaetetus* 173d–e, in which Socrates discusses philosophers' distance from mundane concerns.
21. *'everything human is my business too'*: Terence, *Self-Tormentor* 77.
22. *'decent fellow'*: The Latin expression *vir bonus* combines both social and moral approval.
23. *Neptune ... grief*: In Greek myth, Theseus prayed to Neptune for the death of his son, who had been falsely accused of raping Theseus' wife, Phaedra.
24. *praetors' decrees ... laws*: Praetors were high-ranking magistrates responsible for the courts. Their decrees, which bear some resemblance to judicial precedent in the American system, are here distinguished from laws passed by assemblies.
25. *Labeo ... Naples*: Quintus Fabius Labeo (consul 183). Nola and Naples, neighbouring cities in southern Italy.
26. *Tusculans ... Numantia*: Five Italian peoples absorbed into the Roman state at various points in the fourth and third centuries. Carthage, in Africa, destroyed in 146; Numantia, in Spain, destroyed 133.
27. *Corinth*: Old and important Greek port city, destroyed by the Romans in 146.

28. *If only ... none*: Cicero refers to the chaotic conditions in the aftermath of Caesar's dictatorship and assassination.
29. *fetial law ... announced*: The *fetiales* were an archaic priesthood in Rome and other Latin cities. Their original function was to provide an opportunity for non-violent or limited resolution of a conflict prior to the commencement of full-scale hostilities.
30. *Popilius ... Cato's son*: Marcus Popilius Laenas (consul 172). Marcus Porcius Cato (234–149), also known as Cato the Elder, an important statesman and writer; his older son, Marcus, died in 152, the same year Cato was elected praetor.
31. *Perseus*: Macedonian king, 179–168; his defeat at Pydna in 168 by the Roman forces under Lucius Aemilius Paullus marked the absorption of Macedon into the Roman Empire.
32. *Twelve Tables*: A summary of early Roman legal procedure. The Romans thought they dated to the mid-fifth century, and the language they employ is clearly much older than that of Cicero. Cicero discusses the Latin term *hostis*, which only gradually took on the specific force of 'enemy'.
33. *civil and legal existence ... prestige*: The penalty for various crimes was removal of citizen status. The loser in an election only lost dignity.
34. *Celtiberians ... Pyrrhus*: The Celtiberians, a people of Spain against whom the Romans waged several wars, most recently in 72; Cicero may use the term in reference to Celtic peoples more generally, whose periodic forays into Italy caused great alarm among the Romans and their allies. The Cimbri, a Germanic people whose entry into Italy in 101 was fiercely resisted by the Romans, under the leadership of Marius. The Latins, Sabines and Samnites, Italian peoples, all absorbed into the Roman state after various conflicts and treaties. The Carthaginians fought several wars with the Romans, but at least in Cicero's view never sought to destroy them *in toto*. King Pyrrhus of Epirus supported south Italian Greeks in their struggles with Rome, early third century.
35. *famous words ... Aeacus*: Verses from Ennius' *Annals* relating to an incident in which Pyrrhus rejected a Roman ransom for captured prisoners and turned them over for free. Pyrrhus claimed descent from the Greek hero Achilles, who was grandson of Aeacus.
36. *Regulus ... enemy*: Marcus Atilius Regulus (consul 267), captured by the Carthaginians in 255. The story of his self-sacrifice is also told by Livy (18.7) and Horace (*Odes* 3.5), among others.
37. *battle of Cannae*: When (in 216) a Roman army was trapped by the Carthaginian forces led by Hannibal – one of the great disasters of Roman history.
38. *Fabricius*: Gaius Fabricius Luscinius (consul 282, 278), military commander against Pyrrhus. See *Friendship*, note 15.
39. *flatterers*: For more on the manipulative behaviour of flatterers, see *Friendship*, pp. 103–4.
40. *transfer of money*: Lucius Cornelius Sulla Felix (138–78), military strongman and dictator of Rome, proscribed his enemies, i.e., he promised a share of their property to anyone who could prove they had died, by whatever means. Julius Caesar redistributed the property of those who died fighting him in the civil wars of 49–46.
41. *Hesiod's command*: See Hesiod, *Works and Days* 349–51. Hesiod was one of the

earliest surviving Greek poets.

42. *'Friends share everything'*: Proverb found, for example, at Plato, *Phaedrus* 279c, and Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 8.11.
43. *A person ... another*: From an unidentified play of Ennius.
44. *Pythagoras*: See *Against Fear of Death*, note 25.
45. *Young men ... spirit of a man!*: Cicero quotes from an unidentified early play, perhaps the *Meleager* of Accius.
46. *Salmacidan spoils ... blood*: The source of this verse line is unidentified. Salmacis, a pool in Caria reputed to cause anyone who drank of it to abandon sexual inhibitions.
47. *Marathon ... Leuctra*: Famous battles from Greek history. At Marathon (490), Salamis (480) and Plataea (479) the Greeks defeated, or at least withstood, the Persian invaders and their allies. At Thermopylae (480) they lost heroically. At Leuctra (371) the Boeotians, under Theban leadership, decisively defeated the Spartans.
48. *Cocles ... Marcellus*: Horatius Cocles, a figure of Roman legend, renowned for single-handedly defending a bridge across the Tiber against an Etruscan army. Three Roman men named Publius Decius Mus (father, son and grandson) died in battle in 340, 295 and 279. Gnaeus Cornelius Scipio and Publius Cornelius Scipio died fighting for Rome during the Second Punic War. Marcus Claudius Marcellus killed a Gallic king in single combat and went on to wrest Syracuse from Spartan control, also during the Second Punic War.
49. *'Knowledge ... not wisdom'*: Plato, *Menexenus* 247a.
50. *every custom ... desire for victory*: Plato, *Laches* 182e–183a.
51. *Themistocles ... Areopagus*: Themistocles, the general who counselled the Athenians to abandon their city and regroup on the isle of Salamis during the Persian invasion of 480. Solon, active in the early sixth century; entrusted by the Athenians with establishing a law code and, as mentioned here, the Council of the Areopagus (named after a hill at Athens), an advisory body composed of former magistrates and hence, in Cicero's view, roughly comparable to the Senate of Republican Rome.
52. *Pausanias ... Lycurgus*: Pausanias, the Spartan general who led the Greek forces in the battle of Plataea (479). Lysander forced the surrender of the Athenians to conclude the Peloponnesian War in 404. Lycurgus, legendary founder of Sparta's distinctive legal and cultural institutions.
53. *Scaurus ... Pompey*: Marcus Aemilius Scaurus (consul 115) and Quintus Lutatius Catulus (consul 78), conservative politicians working within Rome's civilian institutions. Gaius Marius (157–86) and Pompey the Great (see *Against Fear of Death*, note 16) also attained high office, but are better known for their military exploits. Pompey and Cicero were uneasy political allies.
54. *Africanus ... Gracchus*: Publius Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus Africanus, responsible for the destruction of Carthage and Numantia. Publius Cornelius Scipio Nasica led the gang that ended up killing Tiberius Gracchus (in 133).
55. *'Let weapons ... panegyric'*: Cicero wrote a poem celebrating the achievements of his own consulship, from which this verse is taken. He was especially proud of putting an end to the conspiracy of Catiline without having to arm the Roman people or take up weapons.
56. *as happened ... after he had died*: Cato the Elder was notorious for insisting that Carthage be utterly destroyed, a policy not put into practice until after his

death.

57. *Callicratides ... mild blow to the Spartans*: Because Callicratides and the Spartans ended up crushing the Athenians at Arginusae in 406.
58. *Cleombrotus ... Spartan army*: Cleombrotus, commander of the Spartan army when it was defeated by the Thebans under Epaminondas at Leuctra in 371.
59. *One man ... brighter*: Cicero cites verse lines from Ennius' *Annals* that celebrate the delaying tactics used by the Roman general Quintus Fabius Maximus Verrucosus against Hannibal in the Second Punic War.
60. *first ... the rest*: Neither of these is a direct quotation from the surviving works of Plato; but see *Republic* 342e and *Laws* 715b for similar sentiments.
61. *'popular' ... civil war*: Cicero interprets the factional strife between *populares* and *optimates* at Rome as equivalent to class conflict in Greek city-states. The *populares* generally preferred to enact policy through the popular assemblies, whereas the *optimates* gave priority to the Senate.
62. *'Competing ... ship'*: Plato, *Republic* 488a–b.
63. *'Your enemies ... state'*: The maxim is not found in the surviving works of Plato.
64. *Africanus ... bitterness*: Publius Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus Africanus and Quintus Caecilius Metellus Macedonicus are depicted in Cicero's *On Friendship* (p. 99) as former friends who parted ways due to political disagreement.
65. *punish ... which the Peripatetics recommend*: The Peripatetics, followers of Aristotle, on the topic of punishment – as on many others – recommended the mean between extremes.
66. *Gaius Laelius*: Presumably the Laelius depicted in *On Friendship*.
67. *King Philip ... his son*: Philip II, king of Macedon (359–336), father of Alexander the Great.
68. *if a horse ... fortune*: Exact source uncertain. For Panaetius, see *Friendship*, note 21.
69. *The nature of decorum ...* : The discussion that follows seems to be Cicero's addition to traditional Stoic treatment of duties. The term has aesthetic and ethical connotations, in addition to its meaning of fitting the nature of a person, practice or situation.
70. *Aeacus ... just*: Aeacus and Minos, mythical figures whose commitment to justice during life led them to be appointed judges in the afterlife. The verse lines are probably from Accius' *Atreus*, about the monstrous tyrant who feeds his brother the cooked-up flesh of his son. (For Accius, see *Against Fear of Death*, note 64.)
71. *impulse ... what to avoid*: It should be noted that for Cicero both reason and impulse are physical or biological processes, the former being of a higher order than the latter, and therefore entitled to serve a regulative function. Many creatures have impulses, only humans have reason.
72. *Plautus ... variety of topics*: Plautus, exuberant playwright of the early second century; Attic Old Comedy flourished in the late fifth century; Cato the Elder, statesman and writer in the second century. Many Greek writers wrote dialogues or narratives in which Socrates appears as a character, the most famous being Plato and Xenophon. It is unclear which of these so-called *Sokratikoi logoi* Cicero has in mind.
73. *Campus Martius*: The Field of Mars, a large open space in the northwest of Rome, still mostly undeveloped in Cicero's day.

74. *personae ... traits*: The doctrine of *personae* allows Cicero to acknowledge the diversity of human traits while holding fast to a general standard of morality. Appropriate, decorous behaviour is partly determined by our shared humanity, but partly by our age, personality, profession, status, and so on.
75. *Crassus ... Caesar*: Lucius Licinius Crassus (consul 95), figures prominently as a character in Cicero's work *On the Orator*. For Cicero's judgement of Lucius Marcius Philippus (consul 91), see *Brutus* 177. Cicero has Gaius Julius Caesar Strabo (curule aedile 90) speak on the subject of humour in Book 2 of *On the Orator*.
76. *Scaurus ... Scipio*: Marcus Aemilius Scaurus (consul 115) and Marcus Livius Drusus (consul 112), briefly characterized at *Brutus* 111 and 109 respectively. Gaius Laelius (consul 140), the main speaker in Cicero's dialogue *On Friendship*, which discusses his lifelong relationship with the recently deceased Publius Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus Africanus (185/4–129).
77. *Pericles*: Fifth-century Athenian statesman.
78. *Maximus*: Quintus Fabius Maximus, the Roman who wore Hannibal down through delaying tactics.
79. *Pheraean Jason*: Jason of Pherae, fourth-century Thessalian ruler, known for careful manoeuvring among competing Greek city-states.
80. *Solon ... shrewd*: Solon, sixth-century Athenian lawgiver, reportedly feigned madness in order to violate a rule against advocating the recovery of the isle of Salamis.
81. *Sulla ... Crassus*: See, respectively, notes 40 and 17 above.
82. *Lysander ... Callicratides*: Spartan leaders who brought the war against Athens to a successful conclusion.
83. *Catulus ... Mucius*: The elder Quintus Lutatius Catulus (consul 102) and his son (consul 78). Quintus Mucius, probably Quintus Mucius Scaevola 'the augur' (consul 117), whom Cicero elsewhere described as a 'jolly old man' (*Letters to Atticus* 4.16.3). See also *Friendship*, note 1.
84. *Scipio ... Gracchus*: Publius Scipio Nasica (consul 138), here contrasted with his more affable son (consul 111). Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus (tribune 133), assassinated by political opponents.
85. *Minerva*: Roman goddess of wisdom, comparable to Greek Athena.
86. *Cato ... Caesar*: Cato of Utica, also known as Cato the Younger, committed suicide in 46 rather than surrender to Julius Caesar; known for his commitment to Stoic rigour throughout his lifetime.
87. *Ulysses ... what he was after*: Greek Odysseus, the hero of Homer's *Odyssey*, an epic of homecoming. He returned to his home disguised as a beggar and was treated accordingly by many in his household.
88. *Ajax*: Presumably Ajax son of Telamon, who killed himself in shame when Achilles' weapons were awarded to Odysseus instead of him.
89. *dramas ... Ajax*: Cicero refers to plays by Accius (*Descendants*, *Clytemnestra*, *Judgement of Arms*), Pacuvius (*Medus*, *Antiopa*, *Judgement of Arms*) and Ennius (*Melanippa*, *Ajax*). The actor Rupilius is otherwise unknown, but Aesop is mentioned several times in Cicero's letters.
90. *Mucius ... Africanus son of Paullus*: Publius Mucius Scaevola (consul 117) and Quintus Mucius Scaevola (consul 95). Lucius Aemilius Paullus (consul 182, 168) led the Romans in their victory at Pydna in 168; his natural son, Publius Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus Africanus, was adopted into the family of the

Scipios (hence the name).

91. *Timotheus ... son of Conon*: Conon and his son Timotheus, both fourth-century Athenian admirals who won major successes over the Spartan fleet.
92. *Prodicus ... Xenophon*: Prodicus, Greek intellectual, contemporary with Socrates. Xenophon paraphrases his account of the mythical choice of Heracles (Roman Hercules) in his *Memoirs of Socrates* 2.1.21–34.
93. *abrupt termination of relations*: See *On Friendship* (p. 99) for the need to withdraw gradually from friendship.
94. *elder Africanus ... adopted the son of Paullus*: The elder Africanus referred to here is Publius Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus Africanus. On this adoption, see note 90 above.
95. *Catuli*: Presumably Quintus Lutatius Catulus (consul 102) and his son of the same name (consul 78).
96. *Crassus ... Caesar*: Lucius Licinius Crassus, the main speaker in Cicero's dialogue *On the Orator*. Gaius Julius Caesar Strabo Vopiscus (aedile 90), treated as an expert on wit in *On the Orator*; half-brother of the elder Catulus.
97. *Octavius ... Palatine*: Gnaeus Octavius, great-great-uncle of the emperor Augustus (consul 165). The Palatine, one of the traditional Seven Hills of Rome, overlooks the Roman Forum; later the site of the palaces of the emperors.
98. *new man*: The term refers to a Roman who is the first in his lineage to attain one of the highest political offices. Cicero himself, like the Octavius mentioned in this passage, was considered a 'new man', and was proud to be so.
99. *Scaurus*: Marcus Aemilius Scaurus (praetor 56), son of Marcus Aemilius Scaurus (consul 115), a contemporary of Cicero; attained rank of *princeps senatus*, or oldest member of the Senate.
100. *O venerable house ... now*: From an unidentified tragedy.
101. *said about many properties*: Deaths and dispossessions associated with civil war presumably led to the situation Cicero describes with regret.
102. *Lucullus*: Lucius Licinius Lucullus (consul 74), leader of a failed expedition against Mithridates of Pontus, retired to enjoy his wealthy estates.
103. *a return to moderation*: Interestingly, this seems to have been the position adopted by the emperor Augustus and his household in the generation following Cicero's death.
104. *Sophocles ... Pericles*: Respectively, the famous tragedian and the great statesman of fifth-century Athens. Together, they seem to have served as elected military commanders in 441/40.
105. *Socrates ... Aristippus*: Socrates, the Athenian gadfly and philosopher executed by the Athenian state in 399. Aristippus, one of his associates; it is unclear what 'acts of ... goodness' Cicero has in mind.
106. *reasoning of the Cynics*: The Cynics took the principle of living in accord with nature to an extreme, rejecting most if not all social conventions.
107. *'fishmongers ... fishermen' ... 'ointment-sellers ... gamblers'*: The first line quoted is Terence, *Eunuch* 257; the second list of miscreants seems to be Cicero's own.
108. *For who ... universe?*: Throughout his philosophical writings Cicero expresses grave concern over the possibility that men of good will might simply retreat from the public sphere into private studies. Here and elsewhere he struggles to validate the latter without lessening the importance of the former.
109. *Lysis ... Dion of Syracuse*: Dion of Syracuse (408–335), widely believed to have

studied with Plato before becoming sole ruler of his powerful city. For Epaminondas, see *Against Fear of Death*, note 6. Little is known of this Lysis except his role in educating Epaminondas.

110. *Posidonius*: An important Stoic philosopher with whom Cicero had some personal contact. Cicero alludes to shocking passages in Posidonius, much like his reference to Chrysippus' account of bizarre burial customs in Book 1 of *Tusculan Disputations*.

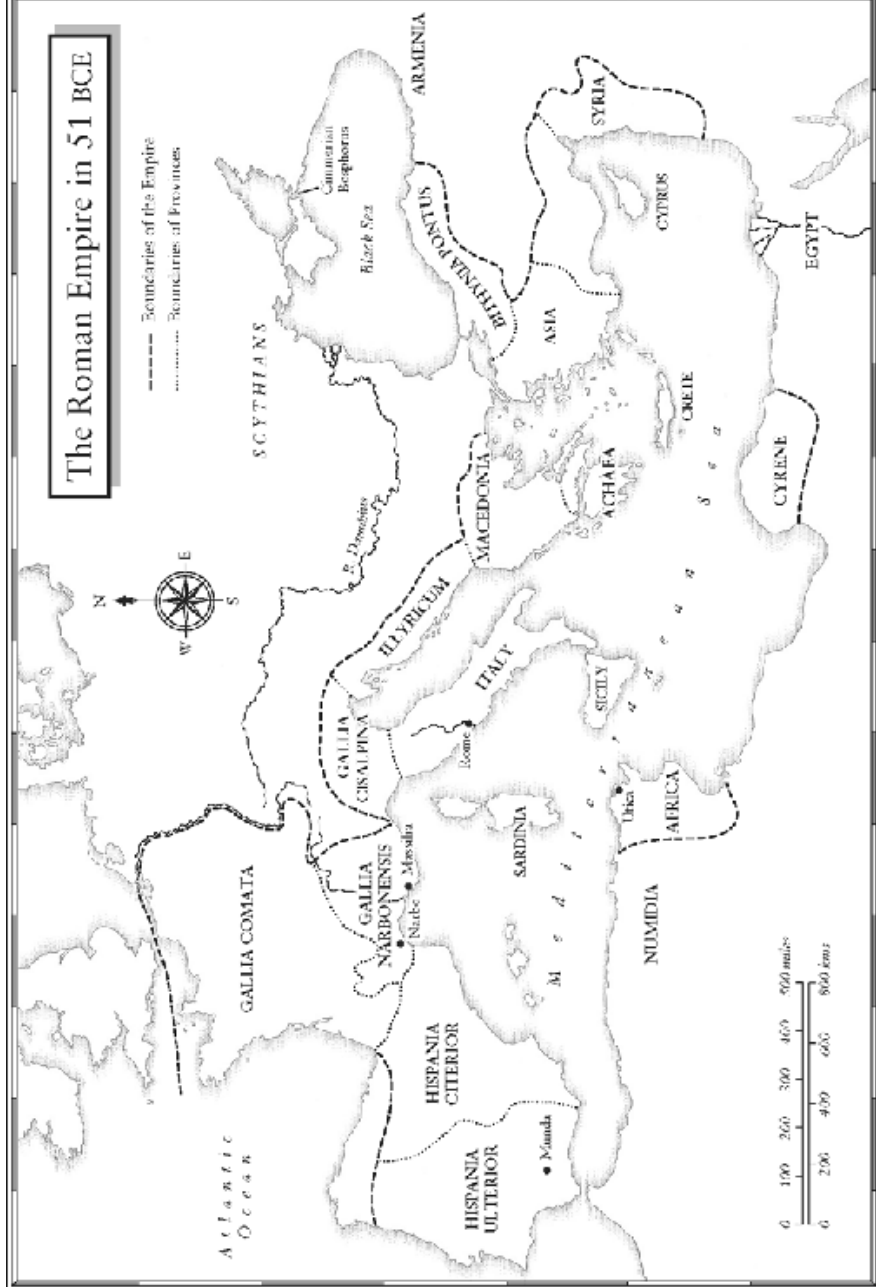
NOTES TO DEATH AND BURIAL OF CICERO

Selections from ancient authors

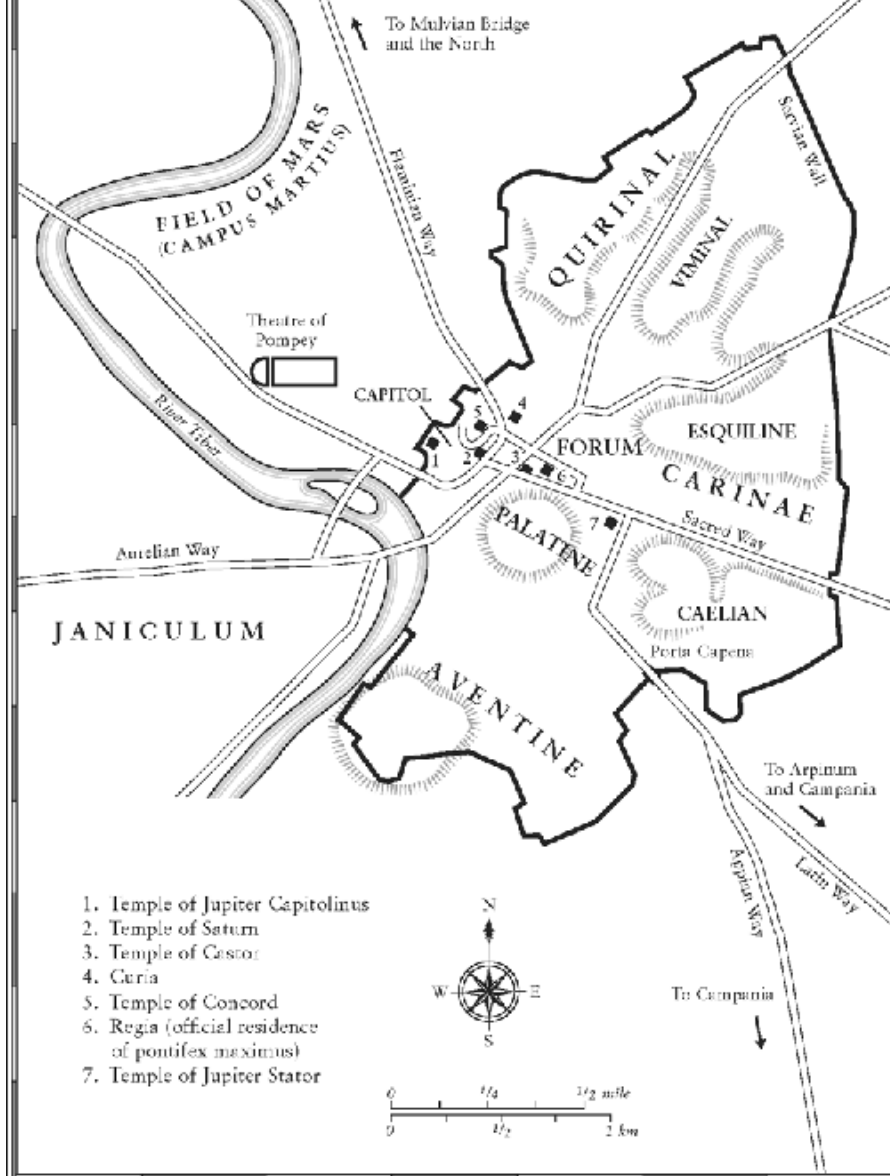
1. *Seneca ... Livy*: Lucius Annaeus Seneca, also known as Seneca the Elder, wrote memoirs of the Roman rhetoric schools of the first generation of the principate. *Suasoriae* are exercises in which the student imagines himself as addressing a figure from myth or history at a moment of crisis. Such exercises pertaining to the final moments of Cicero were especially popular. In the present passage Seneca cites the Augustan-era historian Livy, presumably from a book of his *Histories* that no longer survives. Other accounts (e.g., Plutarch, *Life of Cicero* 47–49, Appian, *Civil War* 4.19–20) paint a less flattering picture of Cicero as he faces death. In his epitaph, Livy balances positive and negative aspects of Cicero's life, making final reference to Cicero's execution of the Catilinarian conspirators, which he interprets as an act comparable to Antony's proscription of Cicero.
2. *Cicero fled ... triumvirs*: After the assassination of Julius Caesar in 44, his great-nephew Octavian and supporters Mark Antony and Marcus Aemilius Lepidus formed an alliance aimed at preserving Caesar's acts, punishing his assassins and securing their own power. Cicero was among those proscribed, or listed for execution, by the triumvirate.
3. *Pollio*: Gaius Asinius Pollio (consul 40), a historian and man of letters.
4. *hands of a friend*: Presumably Lamia, see note 6 below.
5. *I was Marcus Cicero*: As often in Roman epitaphs, the dead are presented as speaking from the grave.
6. *Lamia*: Lucius Aelius Lamia, long-time friend of Cicero, as evidenced by his correspondence (*Ad Familiares* 11.16.2, 11.17.1, 12.29.1). In the year before his own death, Cicero supported Lamia's candidacy for the praetorship. It has been suggested that Lamia was the father of the Aelius Lamia of Formiae, mentioned at Horace, *Ode* 3.17, and *Epistle* 1.14.6. See H. H. Davis, 'Cicero's Burial', *Phoenix* 12 (1958), pp. 174–7.

The Roman Empire in 51 BCE

- Boundaries of the Empire
- Boundaries of Provinces



Rome in the Late Republic



Greece and the Balkans



Cicero's Life

(This Life is taken from Siobhán McElduff's Penguin Classics volume, *In Defence of the Republic*, 2011. All dates are BCE.)

Arpinum was, on the whole, a not terribly remarkable provincial town about 80 miles from Rome. But the year 106 was to see two momentous events in its history, the most momentous since its free residents received Roman citizenship in 188. On 1 January one of her native sons, the great general Gaius Marius, began his first consulship; two days later, a woman named Helvia gave birth to Marcus Tullius Cicero after an easy labour. His father, a member of the local nobility, might have dreamt of his new-born son reaching the dizzying heights of the consulship, but it is unlikely that even the most ambitious father would dream of his son becoming so famous an orator that the name of Cicero would be seen by later Romans as 'not just the name of a man, but of eloquence' (Quintilian, *Institutes of Oratory* 10.1.112).

Cicero's place of birth and the status of his family were always to prove attractive targets for his opponents (Catiline accused him of being only a foreign resident of Rome, Sallust, *Catiline* 31; and a rival prosecutor once called him a foreign king, *In Defence of Sulla* 22). While some later sources claimed that the Ciceros descended from Volscian royalty, others said that his father was a fuller - a processor of cloth - a rather smelly business in the ancient world (it involved human urine and lots of it), and that Cicero had been raised in his shop (Plutarch, *Life of Cicero* 1). In truth, his background was probably neither so grand nor so low. The Ciceros were not just a family of local significance but were connected to important Roman families by blood and friendship and even to Gaius Marius himself (albeit distantly). In later years Cicero would proudly tell the story of the consul of 115, Marcus Aemilius Scaurus, visiting Arpinum and approving so much of his grandfather's opposition to the introduction of the secret ballot there that he wished that he had come to Rome to pursue a political career on the national stage (*On the Laws* 3.16.36). However, despite the fact that we know more about Cicero than any

other ancient individual, we know very little about his mother and not a great deal more of his father. It appears that his father was more of a scholar than a politician and suffered from ill-health, but still had high ambitions for both his sons (Quintus, Cicero's younger brother, was born c. 102), bringing them to Rome in the 90s to improve their chances of having the career Scaurus had wished for their grandfather.

The newly arrived Cicero spent a very short time with the great orator Lucius Licinius Crassus (consul in 95, censor 92; although Crassus was conservative in his opinions, he had supported the attempts by Marcus Livius Drusus to extend Roman citizenship to more Italian allies); he died in 91, having contracted pneumonia after speaking passionately against the consul Lucius Marcius Philippus. Another early mentor was the famous orator, Marcus Antonius (the grandfather of Mark Antony); he died in 87 at the hands of Marius' supporters. The triumvirate of early mentors was rounded out by the augur Mucius Scaevola, who also died in 87. Cicero would later immortalize the trio in his dialogue *On the Orator*.

Cicero and Quintus were unfortunate enough to arrive in a Rome that was being ripped apart by opposing forces and on the verge of civil war. Roman politics was a massively complicated and competitive system (some might say snake-pit) of obligations, families and rank individualism, and one attempts to define its various factions only at great risk. However, the basic division of Roman politics in the Late Republic was between the *populares* and the *optimates*. The *populares* are sometimes described as a left-wing or democratic faction and the *optimates* as the conservative or reactionary party; there is a great deal of truth in this, but it is deceptive as well. The *populares* were not a political party but a collection of individuals who turned to the people to push through legislation, sometimes in the people's interests, but frequently to serve their own needs; we should always remember that one of the most famous *populares*, Julius Caesar, had himself made dictator for life (an office that was only intended to be held for six months), a move that hardly seems democratic no matter how you spin it. The *optimates* believed in the authority of the Senate above all. The leaders of both factions frequently controlled street gangs and many did not care for anything much beyond consolidating their own power. Despite the fact that Marius was a *popularis* hero, Cicero's father seems to have steered well clear of him and his supporters and Cicero was to be a devoted *optimatus* all his life, although claiming from time to time to be *popularis* as well (see *On the Agrarian Law of Rullus*, in *In Defence of the Republic*).

From 90 to 89 Cicero served under Gnaeus Pompeius Strabo (the father of Pompey the Great) in the Social War, the war between Rome and her Italian allies or *socii* (fought between 91 and 87, it revolved around Rome's reluctance to expand her citizenship, and hence the benefits her citizens received from her expanding empire). The following year was also spent in the army, under the future dictator Lucius Cornelius Sulla. Cicero, however, was never an enthusiastic soldier and after this period of service he went happily back to his studies, producing his first work on oratory, *On Invention* (he would probably have been horrified to know that this was to become one of his most read works in the Middle Ages). The Social War was only the start of a series of wars that would rage through Italy over this century: a vicious civil war between the generals Gaius Marius and Sulla was brewing. If Marius was a *popularis* hero, Sulla might be seen as the ultimate member of the *optimates* – though, like many *optimates*, he was willing to ride roughshod over the Roman constitution when it suited him. (Although he was a devoted *optimatus*, Cicero loathed Sulla but always spoke highly of Marius, even writing an epic poem on his life.) This struggle was marked by its utter viciousness on both sides. Sulla's ultimate victory in 82 led to the proscriptions – lists of enemies of the state, whom it became legal and profitable to hunt down. In the end, these lists contained ninety senators (including fifteen ex-consuls) and 2,600 equestrians, all murdered and their estates confiscated and auctioned off. Sulla was also made dictator – illegally assuming the power for more than the six months allowed. His reforms resulted in an expanded Senate (to 600), juries becoming exclusively drawn from senators and the hamstringing of the often turbulent office of the tribune of the plebs. The tribuneship became a dead-end career move since its holders were now forbidden from holding any higher political office; it also lost its powerful right of veto (which was to be restored by Pompey in 70).

The Sullan dictatorship is the setting for Cicero's first extant speech, a defence of Publius Quinctius in a rather unimportant private case which he argued in 81. (It was not his first case, simply the first speech he published.) Cicero was only the second choice, as the previous advocate, Marcus Junius, was called away on official business; Cicero was unfortunate enough to face as the prosecutor Quintus Hortensius, Rome's leading orator. In the next year he took on a more prominent case, that of the accused parricide Sextus Roscius of

Ameria. (This was the first murder case to be tried in Sulla's new court for murder cases, the *quaestio de sicariis et veneficiis*.) Roscius had the double misfortune of having a very large estate and a very dead father; in an era of fortune-hunters this caught the eye of Chrysogonus, Sulla's freedman and minion. He accused Roscius of parricide and snapped up his estate worth 6 million sesterces for the paltry sum of 2,000 sesterces. Broke and an enemy of a powerful man, Roscius could find no one else to defend him until Cicero agreed to take up his case. Cicero took the highly risky tactic of pointing the finger at the powerful Chrysogonus, although he carefully avoided implicating the dictator. His choice paid off and his success made him an up-and-coming advocate.

It was shortly after this (probably in 79) that Cicero left Rome to travel east with his brother Quintus, for health reasons as well as to improve his oratory, touring and studying in Athens and Rhodes (Plutarch, at *Cicero* 3, tells us that he also found it convenient to escape Sulla's anger). During this period he found time to marry his formidable first wife Terentia, a very wealthy woman in her own right. It was probably her money that made it possible for Cicero to launch his political career and run for quaestor in 76 (his term of office was in 75). He was elected at the age of thirty, the youngest age permitted by law, and could look forward to entering the Senate after his year in office. His time as quaestor was spent in the town of Lilybaeum in Sicily, aiding the governor Sextus Peducaeus (then in his second year of office); Sicily was one of Rome's richest provinces and Cicero could, like many others, have taken advantage of this opportunity to enrich himself, but he resisted the temptation. As he travelled home after a successful year in office, he dreamt of being celebrated on his return to Rome; that dream was not to last long. When he arrived in the resort town of Puteoli, he met someone who asked him for the news from Rome. Cicero replied by saying he had no news as he was coming from his province – this was the cue for the praise to begin. 'Oh yes,' was the answer, 'from Africa.' Cicero corrected him, 'No, Sicily.' At this point a helpful third party said, 'Oh yes, you were quaestor in Syracuse' (anecdote told in 54, *In Defence of Gnaeus Plancius* 64–6) – the other end of the island. Cicero gave up and decided to play tourist and stop hoping that he would hear his name echoed to the skies. But he never forgot that to be out of Rome and away from the Forum and the Senate was to be forgotten.

It was Cicero's time in Sicily that led to the successful prosecution of Verres, the rapacious governor of Sicily from 73 to 71 (see *Against*

Verres I, in *In Defence of the Republic*). In winning this case, Cicero triumphed over Verres and Quintus Hortensius, then the reigning king of Rome's orators. This year (70) was also to see Cicero's election to the office of aedile (the first rank of the public offices that started one on the *cursus honorum*, the series of offices that led one hopefully to the consulship), at the youngest permissible age (thirty-seven). More political success ensued: in 67 he was elected praetor (also at the youngest possible age of thirty-nine). In 64 he was elected to the giddy heights of the consulship: he had ennobled his family by winning the highest magistracy in Rome. In between these momentous events, Cicero was also to welcome a beloved daughter (Tullia) and son (Marcus) into the world (we cannot be sure of the date of Tullia's birth but Marcus was born in 65).

During his term as consul, Cicero uncovered and crushed a conspiracy by a disaffected nobleman called Catiline, an act he saw as the crowning achievement of his career. As even a cursory reading of his speeches shows, he was never to stop talking about this event (Seneca the Younger commented that he 'praised his consulship not without reason, but without end', *On the Shortness of Life* 5.1). However, the controversial execution of several of the conspirators on dubious legal grounds and without a trial explains some of the need for his self-praise: it was a defensive move against his enemies. Additionally, we have to remember that as a 'new man' (see *On Duties*, note 98) Cicero never quite fitted in with the traditional aristocracy and could not fall back on the lustre of his ancestors to recommend him: all he (and his family) had was Cicero and his achievements. Yet neither of these can quite explain *all* his self-praise.

Cicero's fall and exile

Cicero's hopes of playing an important role in politics in the years after his consulship were stymied by a new order, one where three men were to come to control Rome. After Pompey the Great's triumphant return in 62 from successful campaigns in the east against the pirates and Mithridates, king of Pontus, Cicero cultivated him assiduously, expecting great returns for having spoken in favour of his command (see *For the Manilian Law*, in *In Defence of the Republic*): he was to be sorely disappointed. Thwarted by a Senate that blocked his efforts to gain land for his soldiers, Pompey turned to Julius Caesar and Marcus Licinius Crassus. In 60 these formed a power bloc, now

known as the First Triumvirate (Cicero was invited to join but refused, despite the troubles he was facing over his actions during the Catilinarian conspiracy). In 59 Caesar held his first consulship and passed an agrarian law providing the land Pompey wanted, despite the Senate's hostility and vetoes by the tribunes (Pompey provided Caesar with an armed force that made this possible). Caesar's colleague Bibulus retreated to his house and declared he was watching the sky for auspices – which would mean that any action of Caesar's was illegal. Caesar simply ignored him.

Under this new power-structure, Cicero's enemies began to move. Chief among these was a former friend, Publius Clodius Pulcher, who had been among those armed to protect Cicero during the Catilinarian conspiracy. However, relations grew decidedly frosty after the Bona Dea affair of 62. Clodius had dressed as a woman in order to infiltrate the female-only rites in honour of Bona Dea (the 'Good Goddess') which were then being held in the house of Julius Caesar and presided over by his wife and mother. Clodius was quickly discovered; in the scandal that ensued, Caesar divorced his wife with the famous words 'Caesar's wife must be above suspicion' and Clodius was tried for sacrilege. During the trial a rather reluctant Cicero was called to break his alibi (Clodius claimed he had been far from Rome on the day; Cicero had seen him in the city). After some of the most incredible bribery ever practised in a Roman court (this is saying something given the amount of bribery that frequently took place), Clodius was acquitted. He never forgot the offence – nor some of Cicero's witticisms at his expense. (When Clodius complained to Cicero that Clodia, his sister, would not give him a foot of space in the theatre for his clients, although she had plenty to spare, being the wife of the consul, Cicero told him not to worry as she'd lift the other foot for him – a crude allusion to the rumour that Clodius and his sister were sleeping together.) Despite the contretemps at Caesar's house, Clodius still managed to forge an alliance with the triumvirate and cast off his patrician status by having himself adopted by a plebeian (see *On his House* 34–8, in *In Defence of the Republic*); this allowed him to run for tribune of the plebs.

In 58 the newly elected tribune Clodius passed a bill which stated that anyone who had executed a Roman citizen without a trial should be exiled from Rome; Cicero fled Rome before Clodius even named him, an act he was later to regret bitterly. A second bill specifically named Cicero and extended his exile to 400-500 miles from Rome – a phenomenal distance that would mean he had to spend the rest of his

life on the fringes of the Roman world. As it turned out, he spent a wretched exile in Thessalonica bemoaning every second of it, blaming false friends for recommending he flee Rome and blaming himself for destroying his family's honour and lives and for all they had to suffer in his absence. (His letters to Terentia are drenched with guilt and self-pity; see, for example, *Letters to his Friends* 14.2 and 14.4. And his family certainly suffered a great deal in his exile – Terentia was dragged across the Forum at one point.) We would probably sympathetically describe him as experiencing a nervous breakdown; the Romans – a nation that believed in self-control and stoicism – would have been far less generous. Besides, whatever emotional and psychological turmoil Cicero experienced he had also suffered a tremendous loss of face, especially by fleeing rather than fighting things out to the bitter end with Clodius.

Cicero's return

His restoration in 57 did not give him the chance he hoped for to once more play an important role in Roman politics, as he was beholden to Pompey and the triumvirate for his return. Cicero found himself politically side-lined and obliged to do whatever the triumvirs wanted – and what they wanted was to be able to use his influence and the finely tempered weapon of his oratory. Cicero found himself forced to defend men he despised – such as Gabinius, one of the consuls of 58 he blamed for his exile. (It was probably some small consolation that he lost that case.) Perhaps as bad as the political impotence he experienced was watching the Republic dominated by three men and the Senate emasculated. As a result, Cicero turned increasingly to writing literature on oratory and philosophy. It was during this period that he composed the treatises *On the Republic* and *On the Orator*, which sought to define the well-rounded public speaker as a cultural ideal. Both of these were fictional dialogues (as were many of his later writings) with parts allocated to Romans of Cicero's own or slightly earlier eras. Even if Cicero could no longer play a pivotal role in politics, by writing these he sought to foster a consensus around key principles of republican governance in response to the turbulence of the times.

Even the collapse of the triumvirate after the death of Crassus in 53 and the death of Pompey's wife, Julia, Caesar's daughter, did not bring the freedom or political stability Cicero craved. The year 53–52

also saw an endless sequence of riots that ground Rome's electoral machinery to a halt; perhaps the only thing that cheered Cicero up in these long years was the death of Clodius at the hands of Milo in 52 (see *In Defence of Milo*, in *In Defence of the Republic*). In 51 Cicero was bundled off to Cilicia as an unwilling governor. For a man who hated to be out of Rome, governing Cilicia was a miserable experience, especially as he had to wage a military campaign; Cicero was never a very keen soldier, even if in this instance he met with some significant military success. To make matters worse, during his time away from Rome Terentia and Tullia organized a marriage between Tullia and the charming but reprobate Caesarian Dolabella (it was not to be a happy marriage, it was already her third; frequent marriages and divorces were not uncommon among the Roman elite).

The end of the Republic

Cicero arrived back in Rome in January 49, only days before a new civil war was about to break loose between Caesar and Pompey. On 10 January 49 Caesar left behind his province and illegally crossed the Rubicon with his forces. Although he was keen for a compromise that would keep the Republic from being ripped apart by civil war, Cicero threw his lot in with Pompey – and the losing side. With Caesar's victory over Pompey and the Republic's forces at the battle of Pharsalus on 9 August 48, the end of the Republic was in sight, even if the death throes would last a long time. In 46 and 45 Caesar dealt further crushing blows to any hope of a military (or any real) opposition by first defeating Republican forces in Africa and Spain. Militarily (and later legally, when he was made dictator for life in 44), Caesar was the only power in Rome. If it had been humiliating to live under the triumvirate, it was even harder to live under the rule of one man, even a man such as Caesar. Cicero responded by again retreating to literature, writing more works on philosophy and oratory (including *Brutus* and *Orator*). As traumatizing as anything else he experienced in those years was the death of his beloved daughter, Tullia, in February 45. Cicero went almost insane with grief; although he read every text he could find on grief, nothing could console him for the loss of one whom he considered a second self. He even divorced his new young wife Publilia (he had divorced Terentia in 46) for not mourning Tullia's death enough.

What must have given him comfort was the remarkably short

duration of Caesar's dictatorship for life: on the Ides of March (the 15th) 44 a group of Caesar's closest friends murdered him. Their reasons were various: his assumption of the position of dictator for life, his planned absence to go and fight the Parthians in the east, the appointment of the consuls for the next three years and, for some, a sincere desire to restore the Republic. Cicero was not among their number though he was ecstatic about the assassination. For a brief period it seemed as if the Republic would be restored as long as some arrangement could be made between Mark Antony and the assassins. But in the end no compromise was possible. Perhaps this was Cicero's finest moment: faced with a triumphant Antony and a city that Caesar's assassins were forced to leave, he found his tongue once more and delivered speech after speech against Antony, all now collectively known as the *Philippics*. The last speech of Cicero to be circulated was the *Fourteenth Philippic*, delivered on 21 April 43 – the same day that the last army to take its orders from the Senate met with Antony at Mutina. Although victorious, both consuls died as a result of the battle and a toothless Senate no longer possessed a military force. Cicero was to publish no more speeches, although he turned to other forms of communication in order to advance his ideals and leave a Republican (and Ciceronian) legacy for future generations of Romans. His philosophical works, such as *On Friendship*, *On Old Age* and *On Duties*, blended Roman history, his own personal experience and Greek philosophy to create a new and influential language of ethical and philosophical discourse.

Even as Cicero worked on these there came the Second Triumvirate of Antony, Octavian and Lepidus – and more proscriptions. Smarting from Cicero's invective, Antony placed Cicero on the list along with his son, brother and nephew (only Cicero's son was to survive the bloodbath). We are told that among those sent to murder Cicero was a man he had once defended on a charge of parricide (whether the story is true or not we cannot tell); when the assassins met up with him on 7 December 43, Cicero was being carried in a litter by his desperate slaves. He ordered them to set the litter down and, looking calmly at his murderers, he stretched out his neck for the blow. His head and hands were taken to Rome and placed on the speakers' platform in the Forum; those who saw them wept, thinking that there they saw the soul of Antony laid bare. Such was to be Cicero's last grisly appearance in Rome. In later years Octavian, now the emperor Augustus, was to catch one of his grandsons trying to hide a volume of Cicero he was reading; he picked the volume up and read a portion,

then handed it back with the words ‘an eloquent man, my boy, eloquent and a lover of his country’ (Plutarch, *Cicero* 49).

Whatever one thinks of Cicero – and he can sometimes be a hard man to like, with his vanity, self-importance, occasional cowardice and willingness to compromise his principles – he was perhaps the last man in an era of warlords to believe in the idea of the Republic, a very lonely position to hold. He was also one of the few in the Late Republic who never thought of turning to an army to force his will upon the state. If that was a mistake, it was an honourable one.

He just wanted a decent book to read ...

Not too much to ask, is it? It was in 1935 when Allen Lane, Managing Director of Bodley Head Publishers, stood on a platform at Exeter railway station looking for something good to read on his journey back to London. His choice was limited to popular magazines and poor-quality paperbacks – the same choice faced every day by the vast majority of readers, few of whom could afford hardbacks. Lane's disappointment and subsequent anger at the range of books generally available led him to found a company – and change the world.

We believed in the existence in this country of a vast reading public for intelligent books at a low price, and staked everything on it'
Sir Allen Lane, 1902–1970, founder of Penguin Books

The quality paperback had arrived – and not just in bookshops. Lane was adamant that his Penguins should appear in chain stores and tobacconists, and should cost no more than a packet of cigarettes.

Reading habits (and cigarette prices) have changed since 1935, but Penguin still believes in publishing the best books for everybody to enjoy. We still believe that good design costs no more than bad design, and we still believe that quality books published passionately and responsibly make the world a better place.

So wherever you see the little bird – whether it's on a piece of prize-winning literary fiction or a celebrity autobiography, political tour de force or historical masterpiece, a serial-killer thriller, reference book, world classic or a piece of pure escapism – you can bet that it represents the very best that the genre has to offer.

Whatever you like to read – trust Penguin.

www.penguin.co.uk

Join the conversation:

[Twitter](#)

[Facebook](#)



PENGUIN CLASSICS

Published by the Penguin Group

Penguin Books Ltd, 80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL, England

Penguin Group (USA) Inc., 375 Hudson Street, New York, New York 10014, USA

Penguin Group (Canada), 90 Eglinton Avenue East, Suite 700, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4P 2Y3 (a division of Pearson Penguin Canada Inc.)

Penguin Ireland, 25 St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2, Ireland (a division of Penguin Books Ltd)

Penguin Group (Australia), 250 Camberwell Road, Camberwell, Victoria 3124, Australia (a division of Pearson Australia Group Pty Ltd)

Penguin Books India Pvt Ltd, 11 Community Centre, Panchsheel Park, New Delhi – 110 017, India

Penguin Group (NZ), 67 Apollo Drive, Rosedale, Auckland 0632, New Zealand (a division of Pearson New Zealand Ltd)

Penguin Books (South Africa) (Pty) Ltd, Block D, Rosebank Office Park, 181 Jan Smuts Avenue, Parktown North, Gauteng 2193, South Africa

Penguin Books Ltd, Registered Offices: 80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL, England

www.penguin.com

First published in Penguin Classics 2012

Translation and editorial material © Thomas Habinek, 2012

Chronology and Cicero's Life © Siobhán McElduff, 2011

Cover: Asarotos oikos mosaic (unswept room), depicting a mouse feeding on food remains on the floor, Roman copy of Hellenistic original by Sosos of Pergamon, 2nd century ad, from Rome, Vigna Lupi. (Photograph © akg/De Agostini Pict.Lib.)

All rights reserved

The moral right of the translator has been asserted

ISBN: 978-0-71-819401-7